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THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL:

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ON THE TRUE COMPREHENSION OF THE CHURCH,

AS EXHIBITED

MAINLY IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

AND

SUBORDINATELY IN THE STANDARDS OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

WITH THOUGHTS ON CHURCH GOVERNMENT AND WORSHIP:

AND

A VIEW OF THE CHURCH IN HEAVEN.

BY THE REV. JOHN S. STONE, D. D.

RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, BROOKLYN.

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TO

THE PARISHIONERS OF CHRIST CHURCH,

BROOKLYN,

Before whom the substance of the following LITTLE WORK was delivered in the form of a Series of Discourses, it is now, in a somewhat enlarged form,

Most Respectfully Dedicated;

With fervent desires that, in connexion with their peculiar privileges as members of the VISIBLE Church, they may attain to all the graces which can adorn, and to all the blessings which shall follow, membership in that SPIRITUAL Church, which is the true mystical Body of Christ, "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all;"

By their affectionate friend and Pastor,

THE AUTHOR.

Brooklyn, October 1, 1846.

PREFACE.

THE form, in which this little work appears, is not such as it would have assumed had it been originally prepared with a view to its appearance from the press. Each Discourse has, indeed, been more or less enlarged; yet, the recasting of the whole into the form of a regular treatise, retaining none of the peculiarities of Pulpit address, would have been a labor incompatible with the concurrent discharge of parish duties. So far, however, as a passing change of phraseology could go, those peculiarities have been laid aside; and the work may therefore be considered as blending, with some of the proprieties of the Pulpit, others more befitting the Press:—whether to the advantage, or to the disadvantage of the book, its readers must judge.

To those, who have opportunity for the comparison, it will be seen, that, in several points, both in the views advanced and in the authorities cited, there is a coincidence of thought and of reference with the Sermon of Bishop McIlvaine on "the Holy Catholic Church." Indeed, it would be wrong to suffer these pages to go forth without carrying a distinct acknowledgment as well of the author's great indebtedness to the contents, as of his cordial assent to the views, of that very able and eloquent Discourse and its truly valuable Appendix. In the Church Theory advanced, there is no difference between that Sermon and the present work. The main difference between the two lies in the less extensive citation of other writers, in the wider and more formal range of Scriptural authorities and of Liturgical illustrations, and in the introduction of a greater number of topics, which have been attempted in the ensuing pages.

In his more special appeal to Scripture, the author has been influ-

enced by an increasingly painful conviction, that, unless something, in the Providence of God, arrest the Theologic tendency of the age, the Protestant Church will ultimately reach a state, in which the argument, in the style of the first Christian writers and apologists, from the sole, all-sufficient authority of the Word of God, will fall—a virtually dead weight—on the minds of a majority both of Clergy and of Laity. What little he can do to lift into that peerless honor, which is its heaven-born right, THE HOLY BIBLE, as the only infallible standard and rule of faith, he is most anxious to contribute. To the inspired Word, nothing can give either a meaning or a certainty, which lies not in its own sense: and from it nothing but Inspiration can develope a meaning or a certainty, which the human mind, as addressed in that Word, and as guided by the ordinary teachings of the Holy Spirit and by other accessible lights, is unable to discover. The latter part of this remark applies to *doctrines*, not to *facts*. Testimony to facts, and determination of doctrines are very different things. So far as testimony may be considered necessary to such *facts*, as the application of Baptism to *Infants*, the *change* of the Day of Rest, the origin of Episcopacy with the *Apostles*, and even the prevalence of the doctrine of the *Trinity*, or of any *other* doctrine, as a matter of History, we may receive that testimony if good and sufficient in kind and amount,—just as we receive any other good and sufficient human testimony; regarding it as adequate to the reasonable proof of any fact, possible under the government of God. But, we cannot receive any exterior documents, or authority, as necessary and sufficient to determine, with infallible certainty, what are the otherwise undiscoverable *doctrines* of Christianity, without thereby elevating those documents and that authority to a certainty and a value above those of the Sacred Records themselves. If, in matters of *doctrinal* truth, the Bible—under the ordinary teachings of the Holy Spirit, and amid the lights, with which a Divine Providence has surrounded it,—cannot disclose its own sense to that mind of man which it addresses, then nothing, lower than a new Revelation, can be *made*, with certainty, to disclose that sense. Such new and clearer Revelation, were it given, could not be safely received unless accredited by *miracles*: and such a Revelation, so accredited, would rise at once to a certainty of authority and an eminence of value, above those of the ancient Bible itself. Hence the peril of receiving TRADITION, in *any* form, as a necessary and infallible interpreter of the doctrinal sense of the Bible. To be of any higher authority than that of ordinary human testimony, or of any other value to interpretation than that of ordinary human helps, under the teaching of the Spirit, Tradition must necessarily take rank with Revelation; and when used to fix

on the doctrinal sense of the Bible an infallible interpretation not otherwise discoverable, must necessarily take rank *above* the Bible. And yet, the Tradition, of which so much is made, has none of the accrediting *miracles* of a Revelation! The gravest suspicion may well be considered as resting on all pretensions to miracles subsequent to the Apostolic age.

The fact, that Mr. Newman's "Essay on the development of Christian Doctrine" was written after he became, though before he avowed himself, a Romanist, destroys not its force as a true exponent of the tendency of the Tractarian doctrine on the subject of Tradition. The starting point of that doctrine cannot be distinctly and intelligently assumed, and the line of that doctrine honestly and logically followed, without reaching an elevation of authority and of value not only *with* but *above* the Word of God. Whether or not the advocates of that doctrine ever go, with Mr. Newman, to the length of receiving the peculiar doctrines of the Church of Rome, while admitting that those doctrines find no support, or none but the most dreamy, in the Bible; and that many of the peculiarities of that Church have been developed in a way, of which the Ancient HERESIES were but the premature, and therefore abortive, anticipations;—whether or not they ever reach *this* extreme of bold but desperate honesty,—they, at least, cannot logically stop, till, like the Pharisees of old, they have, however unintentionally, yet virtually, "made the Word of God of none effect by their Tradition."

For, or against the Tractarian doctrine of Tradition?—this is the very heart of the contest, on the decision of which hangs, *for us*, the question, Papal, or Protestant?—whether this question respect the movement of the individual, or that of the Church. If either the individual or the Church declare *for* that doctrine,—adhesion to Rome is the only result, which lies in a right line before the mover. The individual may die before that result is openly reached: or various strong influences may hold him back, or turn him aside, from the advances of rectilinear sympathy and logic: but nothing else can keep him from reaching and entering the gates, which open into the enclosure both of Romish Theology and of Romish Rites. If Protestants cannot be convinced of this by arguments, there is, at least, some prospect, that they may be convinced of it by facts.

As to the Theory of the Church, advanced in the ensuing pages,—the fact that this Theory is identical with that, embraced and defended by the leading writers of the English Church in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, is admitted,—indeed, it cannot be denied,—by the advocates of the Tractarian scheme. The testimony of those writers is too

explicit and too harmonious to be disputed, or set aside. The only way, in which it can be met, is that, recently adopted in one of our Church periodicals, which consists in ascribing that testimony to undue sympathy with the Continental Reformed bodies, and to ignorance of the value of certain Patristic testimony, the credit of which, it is said, has been since established. The plea, in substance, is, that the English and Continental Reformers were fellow-sufferers in the persecutions, which Rome waged against her reforming opponents. It is not, therefore, a matter for wonder if, in their strong fellowship of feeling for each other, and of dislike for the common persecutor, the English writers were led too far in admitting the claims of the non-Episcopal Reformed bodies of the Continent to the character of Churches, or parts of the one true Church of Christ. Besides, at the time of the Reformation, and in the Seventeenth Century, the Epistles of Ignatius were not free from a suspicion of their authenticity. This suspicion has since been removed, and those Epistles are now available to the Episcopal argument in all the explicitness and strength of their testimony. Had the Ignatian Epistles been in credit then as they are now, the English Reformers and their successors would not have admitted, as they did, the Church character of the Continental Reformed Christians.

As to the former part of this plea,—if sympathy under common persecutions can make Protestants recognize each other as fellow members of Christ, and Protestant Communions acknowledge each other's claims to at least the substance of Church character,—there would be one blessing, if no more, in making such persecutions perpetual. That the English sympathised tenderly with the Continental Reformed Christians in their trials, there can be no doubt: but that their sympathy blinded their judgments, or made them indifferent to the sad loss of the Episcopacy among their companions in suffering; this is a very slender pretence, opposed by abundant testimony to the contrary. The language of Bishop Hall did not express his own sentiments alone, when he thus wrote, concerning Churches, which he called England's "*dearest sisters abroad.*"

"Oh! how oft, and with what deep sighs, hath this most flourishing and happy Church of England wished that she might, with some of her own blood, have purchased unto her dearest sisters abroad, the retention of this most ancient and every way best of governments;" i. e. the retention of government by the Episcopacy.

"It is not the variety of by-opinions that can exclude them from having their part in the One Catholic Church, and their just claim to the Communion of Saints. While they hold the solid and precious foundation, it is not the hay or stubble, which they lay upon it, that

can set them off from God and His Church. But in the mean time, it must be granted, that *they* have much to answer for to the God of Peace and Unity, who are so much addicted to their own conceits, and so indulgent to their own interest, as to raise and maintain new doctrines, and to set up new sects *in the Church of Christ,*" (not *out* of that Church) "varying from the common and received truths; laboring to draw disciples after them, to the great distraction of souls and scandal of Christianity."

No: the English Reformers and their successors were neither blind nor indifferent, they were keenly awake and alive, to the value and the obligation of Episcopacy: and all their sympathy with their suffering brethren of the Continent could not have extorted from them an acknowledgment of Church character without Episcopacy, had they not, as sound students of the Bible, been convinced that Episcopacy, however valuable and obligatory, is not in such sense essential to the being of the Church that, without it, the Church cannot exist.

As to the latter part of the plea;—it is true that the Ignatian Epistles are now admitted to be authentic; but it is not universally conceded that they are free from interpolations. One of the profound Orientalists of England, Mr. Cureton, has recently published, and, by permission, dedicated to the Primate of the English Church, an interpretation of the *Syriac* version of *three* of those Epistles, which, as there is said to be little reason for considering them abridgments, would shew that the expurgated *Greek* copies, in ordinary use,—much as their former contents have been reduced,—still contain many interpolations. It is remarkable that, in this shorter *Syriac* version, almost all the strong passages on the side of Episcopacy are *wanting* Allowing, however, that the Greek copies in common use are *genuine* as well as *authentic;* or that Ignatius actually wrote all the strong passages ascribed to him, on the subject of Episcopacy;—this makes him not a teacher of the Tractarian Theory of the Church. You search those Epistles in vain for the Tractarian Idea of *Apostolical Succession;* i. e.; of ordination as a *virtual sacrament,* transmitting not merely *office,* but a certain mysterious and, as it were, miraculous *sacerdotal power,* on the possession of which, from the Apostles' hands through the line of Bishops alone, depend the validity and efficacy of the other sacraments and of all ministerial acts. Not one of the strong passages, referred to, represents ordination as the exclusive prerogative of Bishops: not one speaks of it as conveying the mysterious sacerdotal power, for which the Tractarian contends. Ignatius, on the supposition that he wrote those passages, was evidently pressing Episcopacy as the regularly derived GOVERNMENT of the Church; a

government then universally received, but having no necessary affinity, with the idea of a sacerdotal power conveyed in ordination, without which there can be no valid or efficacious ministerial act.

A single passage will illustrate the remark, that Ignatius looked on Episcopacy, as a *Government*, for the Church rather than as a channel of *Ordination* for the transmission of such sacerdotal power. Addressing the Magnesians, he says: "I exhort you that ye study to do all things in a *divine concord;* Your Bishop PRESIDING in the place of God, your Presbyters in the place of the Council of the Apostles; and your Deacons most dear to me, being entrusted with a ministry of Jesus Christ." This Idea,—putting, for purposes of *Goverment*, or Presidency, the BISHOP in the place of GOD, the *Presbyters* in that of the *Apostles*, and the Deacons as the servants, or ministers, of Jesus Christ,—occurs repeatedly in his Epistles; and shows how little Ignatius had to do with the Theory of Ordination, as transmitting *sacerdotal* power from the APOSTLES through BISHOPS alone. According to Ignatius, PRESBYTERS, not Bishops, are successors to the APOSTLES.

It is needless to say that the English Reformers and writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were not unlearned in Patristics. USHER, at Oxford in 1644, as well as VOSSIUS, at Amsterdam in 1646, was engaged most learnedly in the great work of expurgating these very Ignatian Epistles. The sacred scholars of England, in both centuries, studied the Fathers *deeply;* though they never exalted them to an equality with the Bible. The Bible, too, they studied *profoundly:* and, being thoroughly versed in both, and withal, skilled as few or none others have since been, in meeting all the turns, and foiling all the movements, of the Romish argument on the subject of the Church, they were led to the adoption of the only Church theory, which can stand this side of an admission of the entire claims of Rome. As Protestants, we *must* go back to the ground of the English Reformers, or we *shall* be either drawn or driven back to the ground of the Romish decrees.

This English Reformation-Theory of the Church,—giving *Episcopacy* its due place of value and of obligation, yet leaving to *all Christians* an open ground of common membership in the one Church of Christ; a ground, on which they *may* all come together in the glorious work of ultimately melting all hearts into one feeling of love, and of uniting all mouths in one profession of faith; has,—the writer believes,—the Bible for its base, and the Bosom of God for its home. It is, he is persuaded, the only window in the Roof of our Ark, through which light from heaven can come in upon the darkness of Christian divisions and confusions, and make manifest the secret of peace, love and con-

cord among all who name themselves of Christ. Cheerfully, therefore, and trustingly does he bid the ensuing little work forth, that it may be the instrument of doing whatever God may allot as his part in the blessed work of filling the world with the spiritual reign of its One Prince of Peace.

BROOKLYN, October 1, 1846.

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In connexion with this book, read Bal-
lou on The Church.

PART I.

THE SPIRITUAL CHURCH.

DISCOURSE I.

"Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."—EPHESIANS ii; 19–22.

THE phrase, "strangers and foreigners," in this passage, refers to what the apostle had said of the Ephesian Christians in the twelfth verse of the chapter. Speaking of their former heathenish condition, he had said; "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise; having no hope, and without God in the world." They had been strangers from the covenants of promise, and aliens, or foreigners, from the Commonwealth of Israel. But, now they were "strangers and foreigners no longer; but fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God."

"The covenants of promise," of which the Apostle speaks, were not different covenants, but successive publications of one and the same covenant; God's covenant of grace with fallen man. This covenant was intimated to Adam; renewed with Noah; formally revealed to Abraham; distinctly confirmed to Isaac and Jacob; delivered under sign and seal,* to Moses; committed to the Aaronic priesthood in their successions;† and finally ratified with the whole Israelitish people, as they were about to enter on the typic land of Canaan.‡ And these

* Exod. xii; xxxiv; 27, 28. † Num. xxv; 12, 13. ‡ Deut. xxix; 12–15.

successive publications are called, "the covenants of promise," because they all contain, express or implied, the one, great promise of a Savior. Other promises, of a temporal nature, were appended to the covenant; but this was the one infinite blessing secured, under whatever form that covenant was published. To this Savior, the Seed of the Woman and the Seed of Abraham pointed; and of His work, the Paschal Lamb and the Sacrifice of Atonement were most eminent types.

From this covenant of promise Heathen nations had ever been strangers. The covenant was restricted to ancient Israel, not because to be an Israelite according to the flesh was necessarily to be a friend of God, and an heir of His promised salvation; but because that people alone, as a nation, had been chosen to be the progenitors of the promised Savior, and the depository of the outward formalities and privileges of the Church. And the Heathen were left out of the covenant, not because the word, Heathen, signifies an enemy of God, an alien and a stranger from His favor, but because, as nations, they belonged to that old world of Idolatry, out of which the "peculiar people" had been chosen; to that wicked world, which, by its sins, had forfeited all claim to the privileges of even an outward covenant with God.

Thus, for four thousand years, stood the world of men. At length, however, the Jews, having become wicked and arrogant under their visible distinction as the "people of God," were about to lose the exclusive external advantages of the "covenant of promise:" and the Heathen, though still covered with all their ancient defilements, had yet passed through the period of exclusion from outward privileges, and were about to receive, in common with the Jews, the offer of the great, the anciently promised salvation.

But, as yet, a strong barrier of separation stood between those two portions of the ancient world. This barrier had its visibility in the marks and rites, which had so long distinguished them, and become the badges of a deep and mutual hostility; and it was a barrier not to be removed, save by the death of Christ. At length, in the "fullness of time," "The Anointed" came: He came and died, as the promised sacrifice for sin: He

died; and with him was slain that legal "enmity," those ceremonial "commandments and ordinances," which had so long divided the world in relation to the Church of God. The Cross, when it fell, broke down "The middle wall of partition;" and through the irreparable breach, the Church passed out, carrying "the covenants of promise," the offers of salvation, to all mankind.

It is true, that when the Jews rejected and crucified their promised Messiah, they were cast off from being the people of God. But how? Not as individuals, to whom the possibility of salvation no longer remained; but, as a nation to whom the outward privileges of the Church were no longer to be confined. Salvation itself was now offered without the shadow of even a visible distinction, to every member of the human family. The death of Christ sunk completely out of sight every ceremonial separation between Jew and Gentile. In the language of the Apostle; it made "of twain one new man." It brought together in Christ believers from both the great ancient members of the world; securing to the individuals of both a full and equal participation in the offers of eternal life through a Crucified Redeemer. Through Christ all may now "have access by one Spirit to the Father." Hence the language of the Apostle; "Now therefore, ye," Ephesian Gentiles "are no more strangers and foreigners," no longer excluded by ceremonial separations from the privileges of the Church, but are permitted to become "fellow-citizens with the Saints," and to be "of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

These words contain a grand description of the Church Universal: and, as this, so far as the Christian world is concerned, has become, emphatically, the great subject of the age, I feel justified in bestowing such time and attention as I may upon what is so profoundly occupying the thoughts of almost every Christian of our day. The Church: what is it? where is it? and how may I know that I belong to it? these

are the questions, which the controversies of the times have revived with an interest, unfelt for hundreds of years past. After having for a long period, been put behind the main truths of Christianity, these questions have again been brought forward, placed in the very fore-ground of our view, and made to demand a distinct and full answer. Such an answer they must and will receive, probably from the present generation; nor are they so unrelated to the Christian teacher's great themes, Christ and His Cross, that they may not properly be answered even in his ordinary instructions as a messenger of the glad tidings of salvation. The Church, indeed, is not Christ; but it is Christ's Body. The Church cannot stand in Christ's stead as our Savior; but it does exist in the world as His servant. The Church cannot make a gospel; but it does preach the gospel. The Church cannot give life through the Sacraments; but it does administer the Sacraments of Him, who, through Himself, giveth life. When, therefore, we speak of the Church, provided we speak right things, we do, in truth, teach Christ; we teach that in which Christ is intimately concerned; that, which holds intimate relationship with Christ.

In view, then, of the truths, that the questions before us demand an answer; and that a right answer is part of the message, which we bring from Christ, let us proceed to seek for some clear, and should God so favor us, some just conclusions on this great topic of the day. What is the Church, and who belong to it? The Church, in its comprehension, is the theme, on which we enter.

1. To the strict Romanist, then, the Church, in its unbroken Catholicism, or Universality, comprehends that visible society only, which holds and submits to its one temporal, human head; and which under this head, has communion in all the Sacraments of that Church. All other Christian bodies, for whatever reason they may have been cut off, and however they may be called Churches, do not, in his view, belong to the one, Universal Church of Christ. To him, the Greek, Armenian, Syrian, and Coptic; the English and American Episcopal, with all other Protestant communities; planted as these various bodies are, with all their millions, from end to end of the earth,

though they may retain some portions of Christian truth, and though many of them as individuals, may, peradventure, be saved; yet are not Churches; nor do they belong to the one, Catholic Church of Christ in the world. They are but heretical or schismatic sects; and have neither part nor lot in the true Church. This, according to his creed, embraces only Rome and her dependencies.

2. Again: to those, who, though not Romanists are yet eager to eschew the name of Protestants, the Church in its real Catholicism, is somewhat more comprehensive. It embraces all those bodies, which retain an Episcopal ministry, and have a common union in Sacraments Episcopally administered. This includes within the Catholic pale the Romish, Greek, and other oriental Churches; together with the English and American Episcopal. All these, it is admitted exist as separate Ecclesiastical organizations. So long, however, as they do not hold free intercommunion, and acknowledge one visible unity, their separation, though it leaves them within the Catholic pale, is yet one of the sorest and most to be deprecated of evils; and its removal is to be sought as one among the highest attainable blessings. But, at this point, the limit of Catholicism, with this class, is reached. According to the view, here taken, all Protestant bodies, not Episcopally constituted, however numerous, full of spiritual life, and active in spreading the knowledge of Christ and the blessings of Christianity to the ends of the earth, do not belong to the Church. They may hold Christian truth in great purity, and, as individuals, myriads of them may be saved; but they are not Churches, nor parts of the Church. They are but heretical, or schismatic sects; and their existence as such, is an evil of the gravest, most afflictive magnitude. The Church's great labor should be to reabsorb them into herself, while, at the same time, she is seeking to recover her own lost visible unity. Submission to a Universal Episcopacy, claiming the supernaturally derived power of conveying the Holy Ghost, together with the real body and blood of Christ, in ordination and in sacraments, is, upon this theory, the indispensable requisite not only to the integrity and perfectness, but to the very existence of the Church.

3. Having thus exhibited what we may regard as, on one side, the two leading ideas of the Church in its comprehension, I purpose now to direct attention, on the other, to a third; that the reader may be able to judge for himself which is most in accordance with the word of God, and with our own Protestant Episcopal Standards. Instead, however, of directly presenting this idea, I prefer to approach it through some previous views, taken by the way from Scriptural positions.

1. It will be admitted, then, that the object of God, in the revelation of His will and in the incarnation of His Son, is, to save men from sin, and to bring them to eternal life. This great work, so far as it is to be wrought in the sinner, requires a thorough reconciliation to his Heavenly Sovereign, on the simple terms of "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ;" * an individual and hearty concurrence in the Divine Counsel of Redemption. Every person, thus reconciled, is said to be "justified by faith," and to "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Every one, thus reconciled, is "renewed in the spirit of his mind," lives "a godly life," grows in holiness, and has, even on earth, the beginning of the true life eternal. This eternal life now "abideth in him;" he has already entered on the foretaste of his salvation. Hence the words of Christ; "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but, is passed," passed already, "from death unto life." † This assurance is tied to no observance of outward institutions. It brings to view nothing but the Savior and the sinner; the Savior's word and the sinner's faith; that true faith, which is always followed by repentance and holiness. It is essentially an inner transaction between Christ and the true believer. Wherever the Word goes and is received into the faith of the heart, there is the basis of the divine assurance, "he is passed from death unto life." This is the reason, not merely why there shall be, but, why "there is, joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." His repentance is the first step out

* Acts xx; 21. † John v; 24.

of that faith, which taketh hold on eternal life. The Angels see in it another victory for Christ; another soul already "passed from death unto life." The Scriptures are full of this peculiar teaching; the assurance of salvation to every one, whatever be his outward circumstances, that truly believes in Christ. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." "There is no difference," says the Apostle, "between the Jew and the Greek;" the most and the least privileged; "for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For, whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." Whosoever calleth, in that "faith, which cometh by hearing, as hearing cometh by the word of God," "shall be saved." Whosoever. It is impossible to find a man, with this faith, under such peculiar circumstances as to invalidate the truth of this assurance, "he shall be saved." The Eternal Father hath so bound himself to this, that He would not be "just" were he not also "the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," whenever and wherever this believer may be found. Both "the law and the prophets," as well as the gospel, concur in the "witness," that "the righteousness of God, by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all and upon all them that believe." As "all have sinned," and are alike in that article, so, among all who have this faith, "there is no difference:" nothing can make a difference in favor of one and against another, in whom this faith dwelleth. "Jesus said; I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to me," whoever he may be, and whatever his outward lot, "he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." "I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life." * There, Christian reader, is the Gospel and nothing but the Gospel. We must convict the solemn Trinity

* Acts xvi; 31.—Rom. x; 4, 12, 13.—iii; 21, 22, 26.—John vi; 35.—xi; 25, 26.—iii; 16.

of falsehood before we can take eternal life from him that truly believes in Jesus Christ. It matters not by what name he is called, or in what connection he is found; if he have this faith, whole and uncorrupt, in his heart as well as in his head, he "hath eternal life," and no man can take from him that "gift of God."

But, why does the Scripture make so much of this faith? Because this alone constitutes the Christian character? No. But because it cannot in that character be alone. It is, under the Spirit, the parent of all other holy graces. This truth, in former times, drew from Bishop Hall the cry; "O the grace of faith! justly represented to us by St. Paul, above all other graces incident unto the soul, as that which, if not alone, chiefly, transacts all the main affairs tending to salvation. For faith is the quickening grace; the directing grace; the protecting grace; the establishing grace; the justifying grace; the sanctifying and purifying grace. Faith is the grace, which assents to, apprehends, applies, appropriates Christ; and hereupon it is the uniting grace; and (which comprehends all), the saving grace."

In the texts, thus far cited, we see the simple, essential requisites to salvation under the gospel; those, without which no man, to whom the word of God comes, can be saved; and with which any man may and will be saved. Let us now take one farther step.

2. Every one, in whom the required faith is found, has a direct and personal union with Christ; so that he draws his spiritual life, not by succession from another believer, but immediately from the Savior himself. Nothing, however thin, intervenes between the two. By faith the believer is "in Christ;" and by the same faith Christ "dwells in the believer's heart." This mystic union between Christ and each individual Christian is as close and as perfect, as though Christ and each individual were the only ones in all the world concerned in that union. As a foundation, Christ is as broad as the realm of sin, and as long as the age of grace; so that every true believer touches, immediately, and for himself, that, on which he is builded. In this peculiar union, there is, not a miraculous

impartation of the Divine substance, but, a real derivation of the Divine life: and faith is the grace, by which the heavenly derivation is realized. Faith brings the soul to the spring-head in Christ; faith drinks of the living water, which He gives. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him, a well of water, springing up into everlasting life." "I am the vine; ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so bet hat the Spirit of God dwell in you: but if ye have not the Spirit of Christ, ye are none of His." "Your life is hid with Christ in God." "He that," with an appropriating faith, "eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him."* These are some of the passages, in which this sacred union is indicated; and they shew that, while Christ holds this union with all, who truly believe in Him, he still holds it with each, separately and severally. Each single Christian holds this living connexion and communion with the Savior, as immediately and as closely, and draws life therefrom as largely and as perfectingly, as though himself and the Savior were the only beings concerned in the divine affinity.

I have thus shewn, from the inspired Word, what it is that essentially characterizes the true Christian, and what is the relation, which he sustains with Christ, his divine head. We are now prepared for a still further movement.

3. There are, then, in the world, as there have been from the beginning, and will be to the end, a steadily growing, and at length a very great company of human beings, sustaining the character and the relation, which I have just explained; the character of true believers in Christ, the relation of a holy, individual union with Christ. These, as represented in the Bible, and as found in fact, are an exceedingly "peculiar people." There are none like them in all the world. In

* John iv; 14.—xv; 5.—2 Cor. v; 17.—Eph. iii; 17.—Rom. viii; 9.—Col. iii; 3.—John vi; 56.

many outward respects, they seem like common men; but, in the depths of their being, they are quite unlike all others. They are stamped with the lineaments and features of quite another nature. If what has been wrought within could be laid open to the eye of sense, they would instantly be known from other men, all over the earth, and throughout all heaven. Gathered from whatever nation or kindred, and marked by whatever peculiarities or inequalities, they would yet be found, in their main characteristics, alike; shaped by the same divine hand, stamped with the same spiritual features, passing through the same general experience, belonging to the same great company, and tending to the same sublime destiny.

Now, this exceedingly "peculiar people" are found, not exclusively within the lines of any one Christian community, but, in greater or less numbers, within the limits of all: some, doubtless, even among the most corrupt of those communities; and myriads among those, which rise nearest to primitive purity. Here, however, comes in view a remarkable fact. A very considerable number of this "peculiar people" are found in Christian communities, which neither submit to one temporal human head, nor receive an Episcopal ministry and sacraments. They are known by various human names; but, in character and relation, they belong to that same "peculiar people," who have been described. They have all the lineaments and features; all the views and experience of that people; every thing, which can mark them as belonging to the same spiritual race. Of this, there can be no question. If the true though hidden characters and relations of the whole holy company were laid open, this portion of them would be seen, before earth and heaven, to be identical with all the rest. What, then, is the relation, which these acknowledged Christians, thus destitute of the Episcopacy, bear to the one, true Church of Christ? *

This question is important. I have no undue sympathy with those, who refuse to receive an Episcopal ministry. Still,

* It will be seen that I am speaking—not of non-Episcopal communities, in the mass, but—of those among them, who answer to the foregoing description of God's "peculiar people."

their existence in such considerable numbers, and with such undeniable evidence of identity with the "peculiar people," is a grave and weighty fact, of which we must, in some way, dispose. Again, therefore, I ask; what is the relation, which they bear to the one, true Church of Christ? This question is important, chiefly from the consideration; that if the Christians, now in view, belong to the one, true Church, then our proposed search for a third idea of this Church, different from either of the two, which have been propounded, is indispensably necessary. Do these Christians, then, belong to the one, true Church of Christ? The advocates of both those theories answer; they do not. I am constrained to the opposite reply; they do belong to this Church. My reason for saying this must, for the present, be briefly given.

Either, then, they belong to this one, true Church, or they are saved without belonging to any Church. Now, whether God ever saves men, where Christ is unknown, or when it is impossible to confess Him before the world, it is not necessary here to inquire. This, however, may be safely said; where the Gospel is preached; where the Holy Spirit is sent forth to apply that Gospel; where Christ is thus fully made known; and where men have a fair opportunity to confess him before their fellow men; there God saves no man but in His one appointed way, on the terms of His one, unchangeable covenant of grace, and as a member of His one, true Church. Under the conditions here assigned, I hold the doctrine to be strictly true, that, "out of the Church there is no salvation." It is only when a wrong idea of the Church is embraced, only when a particular ecclesiastical body arrogates to itself, exclusively, the style and prerogatives of the true Church of Christ, that the doctrine becomes not only false but impious. When the word, Church, is rightly understood, and is used within the conditions just named, the doctrine is both true and precious; that "out of the Church there is no salvation." But, the Christians, of whom we speak, obtain salvation; and they are saved within the specified conditions. They are saved by means of the Gospel, through the knowledge of Christ, by the renewing of

the Holy Ghost, and with a confession of the truth, and of the true Savior before men. They are saved as all other Christians are saved. They, therefore, belong to the one true Church of Christ.

If, by the opposite opinion, it be meant, that, though saved, yet they are not members of the Church in the sense of either of the two definitions, already given, this is but saying that they are neither Romanists nor Episcopalians. But, if it be meant that, though saved, yet they are not members of the Church in any sense, then it may be asked; what essential necessity for a Church exists? If, from age to age, myriads are saved where the full light of Christ is shining, and where the full power of the Holy Spirit is sent forth, while yet they belong, in no sense, to the Church, then, the Church, instead of being exalted and shewn to be divinely necessary, is degraded, and shewn to be of comparatively little worth. Men may be saved without, as really as within, its enclosure; without, as truly as with, its name. The Church, as to her specific difference, is brought down to the rank of a mere keeper of manuscripts, and regulator of forms. All higher attributes and privileges, all more spiritual functions and influences, it only shares in common with a body of Christians, who belong not to its communion. The moment we say that these higher attributes and privileges, these more spiritual functions and influences, whereby alone Christian men are saved, are not partially and accidentally, but exclusively and in the design of God, enjoyed by the Church (and this I hold to be the true doctrine), the moment we take this position, we compel ourselves to admit that this other body of Christians, who share these attributes and privileges, these functions and influences, and are saved thereby, belong to the Church. There is no way of evading this conclusion but by admitting that the Church merely shares the highest and richest means of salvation with a body, who do not belong to the Church.

But, if these Christians belong to the Church of Christ, then, clearly, so far as its comprehension is concerned, neither of the definitions, which have been given, is right; and we are

compelled to seek a third idea of the one true Church. What, then, is this third, this more comprehensive idea of the Church of Christ?

The answer comes from what has already been said. Without denying, but rather cordially holding, that, in one important sense, the word, Church, may, with strict propriety, be applied to a particular ecclesiastical organization, and that it actually is so applied in the Bible, in history, and in common usage; it is, nevertheless, plain, that what has, thus far, been said leads directly to this definition; The Church, in its highest, largest, truest sense, is, that great spiritual company of true believers in Christ, who, in the main, hold His truth whole and uncorrupt, and who, by His sole divine agency and power, are saved from sin and everlasting death. In this, its highest, largest, truest sense, the Church is, precisely, the whole company of that very "peculiar people," whose character and relation to Christ I have already set forth. This great company exists both in heaven and upon earth; and it is gathered and to be gathered from the present, from all past and from all coming ages. And this, with Bishop Taylor, I understand to be the sense of what we profess to believe in the Creed; "the Holy Catholic Church, the Commnnion of Saints." The Body, thus named in the creed, is not merely in name, or by a fiction of language, or by charitable supposition, but, in reality, in the truth of words, and in the sight of God, a Holy Church. It is literally a "Communion of Saints." It comprises all, of whatever age or country, of whatever name or connexion, who, in the main, hold the truth of Christ whole and uncorrupt, and are saved by Him from sin and eternal death. It is a "Communion of Saints;" or, of those truly holy men, who have a common union with Christ in His truth, His life and His salvation. These alone are His Spiritual Body; and He alone is their one Head. They alone are His true Temple; and this Temple alone is filled, truly and always, with His divine and sanctifying presence.

Nor is this Body, thus holy, merely called a Church; as if, by a figure of rhetoric, it were honored with a name really belonging to something else, to which it is related; but it is,

by eminence, the Church; in its best, its original sense, the Church of Christ; and, instead of receiving, it gives its name to whatever is analogically called a Church. Christ first constituted, and has ever since enlarged the Church, by gathering and "adding to it those who are saved." (τοὺς σωζομένους.)* The Savior and the saved are the first and fundamental elements, as well as the last and finished development, of His Church.

The difference between this idea of the Church, and both the previous definitions of it, which have been given, will be seen by observing, that the Church is not, in itself, an agent in saving men, but the great company of men saved, in spiritual union with Christ their Savior. The difference is essential.

I say not that, in no sense, does the Church use means for saving men. As an organized Body, such means have been graciously entrusted to its use. This, however, does not make the Church, in itself, an agent in saving men, any more than medicine, put into the hands of a Physician, makes the Physician himself a medicine, or constitutes him the power, which gives that medicine its effect in healing the sick. To make the Word and sacraments to be "of the essence" of the Church, prepares the way for making the Church itself, in a sense co-ordinate with Christ, an agent in saving men; and may well account for the fact, that, in the teaching of some, the Church so nearly puts the Savior out of sight. What I mean, in the distinction taken, is, that the Church is not, in any sense, itself an agent in saving men. In its first and true idea, it is just the whole company of men saved, in spiritual union with Christ their Savior. Christ and the great company of those, who live in Him by faith, and in whom He lives through faith, this is the very essence of the Church; that, without which the true Church cannot exist; that, with which it cannot but exist. The importance of keeping this idea distinctly in mind can hardly be overrated.

Thus far I have merely been seeking a definition of the Church of Christ in its true comprehension. Hereafter, I hope

* Acts ii; 47.

to shew that this definition is consonant both with the Word of God and with our own Standards; after which it is my purpose to direct attention to what has become the more ordinary acceptation of the word; to the Church as a visible and organized body.

I cannot close the present view without pressing a question, which grows out of all that I have now said. Do we, each for himself, belong to the true Church of Christ? This is not a question, touching mere outward relations. Our being members of a visible ecclesiastical organization, does, by no means, settle this question. Are we included among the "peculiar people," whom I have described? We must be, or we cannot belong to Christ and be saved by Him. Our souls must be in Him by faith; and, by faith we must draw life directly from Him. If we are His in an external sense only, all the present names and badges and privileges of our Christian lot will be but so many aggravations of our guilt and wretchedness, when we come to stand before God. If we are Christians only in outward shew, all those names, badges and privileges, will then be but so many splendid patches upon the dark garment of our shame; enhancing, by the very strangeness of their contrast, the ignominy and the misery with which we shall be inwardly consumed.

God give us, each and all, a discerning eye, that we may see our true condition now; so that, if we are not already "in Christ" by faith, and growing through Him in holiness, we may seize, before it be forever lost, our opportunity, for being "found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless."

DISCOURSE II.

"Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the Saints and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone: in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."—EPHESIANS ii; 19-22.

THESE words, I have already remarked, contain a grand description of the Church Universal, the one true Church of God. They shew it to be, as represented in the language of the Creed, "The Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." This Church is the great company of those holy ones, who have a common union, by faith, with Christ, their sole Head; who hold His Truth, in the main, whole and uncorrupt; and who are saved, by His sole agency and power, from sin and everlasting death.

This idea of the Church, so far as it was brought out at the close of my first discourse, was drawn from the language of the Bible, descriptive of the true Christian, and of his individual relation to Christ.

But it will be asked, are there any passages in the Bible, which, while describing the great company of true believers, thus individually united to Christ, represent them as the Church? Are there any Scriptures, intentionally describing the Church itself, which contain the basis of the idea just presented?

This question will lead me to an examination of two sets of passages; the true sense of which, as I apprehend, will shew

that this idea is sustained by the teaching of the Inspired Word. One of these sets of passages presents the Church under certain metaphors; the other presents it under its own proper name.

I. First, then, passages which present the Church under certain metaphors.

1. In the tenth Chapter of the Gospel by St. John, Christ presents His One True Church under the metaphor of a "FOLD." The relation between Him and His people, in this figure, is, of course, that of the Shepherd and his Sheep. Some of the language, which He employs in carrying out the figure, is as follows: "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, the same is a thief and a robber." "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy; I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd giveth His life for the Sheep." "And other sheep I have, which are not of this FOLD; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be ONE FOLD, AND ONE SHEPHERD." "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, who gave them me, is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are One."

Now, here, under this idea of a FOLD, with a Shepherd and his sheep, we are evidently presented with the one, true and whole Church. Of whom, then, does it consist? Of none but the Shepherd and his sheep; those, and those only, who "enter in by Christ, and are saved;" who "hear His voice, and follow Him;" to whom He "gives eternal life, and who shall never perish." The FOLD, which encloses both the flock and its Shepherd, if explained separately, may be regarded as the securities and guaranties of that fixed and unchangeable Covenant of Grace, within which, the whole sacred company, in their spiritual union with Christ, are securely held. But,

if the whole figure be interpreted together, THE FOLD and those whom it CONTAINS, it will then represent the one, true and whole Church of Christ; both that part which had been saved before His advent, and that which was to be saved afterwards. "Other sheep," says Christ, "I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be ONE FOLD AND ONE SHEPHERD." That is, "my sheep among the Gentiles are not yet actually gathered in; but they are mine, and gathered in they shall be. The Fold is one, and the Shepherd one; and when the gathering is ended, eternity shall receive the whole to the fulness of my salvation.' In this place, the metaphoric term, FOLD, clearly means, the one, whole enfolded flock, who are to be saved, from first to last, under the security of the eternal covenant of grace, and in union with Christ, their only and Divine Head. Here, then, is one scriptural view of the true and whole Catholic Church of Christ, in perfect coincidence with the idea which I have presented.

2. Take another. In the third Chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Paul presents the same blessed company under the metaphor of a "FAMILY." "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole FAMILY in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now, unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end."

It needs no comment to convince us that, what is here termed "the whole family," which takes its name from Christ, which exists "in heaven and earth," in whose "hearts Christ dwelleth by faith," who are "all saints," and who are, sooner

or later, to be "filled with all the fulness of God," means, as in the former case, simply the one, true and "holy Catholic Church," that one spiritual family of the saved, whose only Head is Christ, and in whose very hearts Christ dwelleth. Or, if any should deem such comment needful on the metaphor before us, we have it at the close of this very passage, in the words of Inspiration itself, where this very "FAMILY in heaven and earth" is called neither more, nor less, than "the Church," that "Church in which God is glorified by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages;" that is, from the first sinner saved through faith in "the blood of sprinkling," and onward thence, even to "world without end."

3. In the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, we have another of these metaphors for the one true Church, in the word "BRIDE." "Come hither," says the angel of the vision, "and I will show thee THE BRIDE, the Lamb's wife." And of whom does this spiritual BRIDE of Christ consist? Look at the end of the chapter where the figure has been changed to that of a city, and you will see. "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it." "And there shall, in no wise, enter into it any thing that defileth, neither that worketh abomination, or a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." What can be clearer than these words?

It is true, that this vision is generally, though not by all, supposed to represent the state of the Church in heaven; its finally finished perfection; inasmuch as "the Bride," or "Great City, the holy Jerusalem," was shewn "descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God." Let it be supposed, then, just for the sake of the supposition, that the object of the vision was to exhibit the Church in its heavenly state. This would not destroy the force of the metaphor in its application to the present subject. For the Church becomes "THE BRIDE, the Lamb's wife," on earth; and it is only because she becomes such on earth, that she will finally constitute His Bride in Heaven. On earth the covenanting and espousals must take place between Christ and each individual; or in Heaven will never be celebrated the marriage

between Him and the whole body of the saved. Hence, when the Apostle says of the holy marriage union between husband and wife, "This is a great mystery;" he immediately adds; "I speak of Christ and the Church." That is, the holy ordinance of human marriage is a mystic symbol of the divine union now existing between Christ and the Church. This union has existed from the beginning, and the Church has been and will be "the BRIDE the Lamb's wife" through all time, as well as through all eternity.

That this union exists on earth, as well as in heaven, is evident from the last clause of the chapter in Revelation, from which I have quoted; where it is said, none "shall enter into it," none shall constitute this BRIDE, "but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life." WHEN are they written in that Book? I answer; here, on earth and in time; or, no where and never. When the Seventy rejoiced that "the devils were subject unto them through Christ's name;" he said "In this rejoice not;" "but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven." "ARE written;" not "SHALL be written." Had they not been so written on earth, their names would never have stood in heaven, on the eternal register of life. And this is as true of every Christian, as it was of the Seventy.

Even, then, on the supposition that the metaphoric Bride in this passage, means the Church in its finally perfected state, it shews that they only belong to it, in this its true sense, who, while on earth, have their names written in heaven. Still more definitive is the passage on its true construction, that the Bride, the Lamb's wife, is a figure of the true Church in this world, as well as in the world to come. In this light, the passage settles the question, and shows that the true Bride, the Church of Christ in its highest sense, is composed exclusively of "the saved," of those, who, on earth, have their "names written in the Lamb's Book of Life." His Book of LIFE. No spiritually dead soul is ever betrothed to the divinely living Savior.

4. In various parts of the New Testament, we have still another of these metaphors for the Church, in the word "BODY." "As we have many members in one Body," "so we, being

many, are one Body in Christ."* "That he might reconcile both unto God in one Body by the cross."† Various gifts of ministry, we are told, were imparted to this Body, for "the perfecting of the saints;" "for the edifying of the Body of Christ; till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." "That, speaking the truth in love, we may grow up into Him, in all things, which is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole Body, fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in love."‡

All this is exceedingly strong language. Christians are here called "one Body in Christ." "In this Body" they are "reconciled to God, by the cross." They are "saints," the edified "Body of Christ," growing unto a divine "unity;" "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." They "grow up into Him in all things" as their "Head." "From Him the whole Body," every part and member, literally the whole Body "is fitly joined and compacted together." In this divinely vital fitting, joining and compacting together, "every joint supplieth" its due proportion. In this supply, there is an "effectual working," or divine energy. And, through this effectual working, there "is made a proportional, or symmetrical increase of the Body, in every single part." This last expression is the true force of the language in its original. So surely, then, as the metaphoric Body, here described, means the Church of Christ, every member of this Church, every limb, joint, ligament, and function, without the least exception, grows into and from Christ, by an inward divine energy, and is a spiritually vitalized part of that fitly joined and compacted Body, which carries the life of Christ in every possible portion, "from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet." Now, what sort of Church is this? Just that, which has been, over and over

* Rom. xii; 4, 5. † Eph. ii; 16. ‡ Eph. iv; 12–16.

again, described: the great company of "the saved;" whose names are written here on earth, and by the pen of the living Spirit, "in the Lamb's Book of Life." This is the true Church; and those only who belong to this, belong to the true Body of Christ.

I know it is said, that the language which describes this Body, is addressed to the promiscuous mass of Christians in Ephesus and Rome, among whom, even then, there were probably some hypocrites and apostates; and that, therefore, the Church, so described, is not a pure but a mixed Body. To this I reply, that, though there may have been, at Ephesus and Rome, hypocrites and apostates, who called themselves Christians, yet they were not Christians, and did not belong to the Body described. They were, through human infirmity, mixed up among Christians, but they were not Christians; and therefore the Church, here addressed, was, in truth, made up of those only, whom the language employed truly describes. In this way alone are we able to escape the absurd alternative; either that hypocrites and apostates are saved, or that there could not have been a single hypocrite or apostate either at Ephesus or at Rome. For, certain it is, that the language which we have quoted, describes a Body, every possible limb, or member of which, carries in it life from Christ, even the life which is eternal; a Body, in which the divine energy, or in-working, "makes a proportional or symmetrical increase of every single part." But, upon this point, I shall have occasion to speak again; for the present, therefore, it is dismissed.

5. I shall notice but one further metaphor for the Church: and that we find in the use of the word "TEMPLE." Thus, in Ephesians ii; 21, speaking of "the household of God," the Apostle says, "All the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord." He is speaking here of precisely the same company of persons, whom, in some of the passages, already examined, he calls a "family," and a "body." In other places, also, the metaphor of a "Temple" occurs. Thus, in II Cor., sixth Chapter, Christians are called "the Temple of the living God;" while, in I Cor., third Chapter,

the Apostle inquires: "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you?"

That the Body, here called a Temple, is identical with the one, true Church of Christ, is manifest from the scope of the chapter, Eph. ii., from which the principal passage is taken. The Apostle there tells us, that in Christ, is "made, of twain, one new man." Now, what were "the twain" thus made "one" in Christ? Not the whole Jewish nation, and the whole Gentile world; but "the saints" in the Jewish Church, before and at the Advent of Christ; and "the saints" from Gentile races, gathered into the Church after that Advent. In other words; the one, true and whole Church of Christ, in all ages; that "new man," which is made "one" in Christ; and whose members are gathered from the "two" great branches of the human family. If this do not mean the Church, it will be difficult, nay impossible, to find a description in which it is included.

The perfect soundness of this interpretation is evinced by what immediately precedes this chapter. Speaking of the same company of "saints," which he afterwards calls a Temple, the Apostle says that Christ is "Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."* This is definitive of the question. The Temple, described in the main passage before us, is the Church; that Body, whose Head is Christ, and whose members Christ filleth; "all in all."

But, if this Temple be the Church, it behoves us to look well to the question, of what materials is it composed? Looking, then, at the same chapter, we find it composed of "saints" only; of those, who, in their individual characters, are united with Christ by a true faith, and saved. They are particularly addressed as having been "quickened from a death in trespasses and sins," "raised up, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus;" "saved by grace through faith;" "made nigh by the blood of Christ;" and blessed with "access by one Spirit unto the Father." Both the Jewish and

* Ephesians i; 22, 23.

the Gentile saints, who constitute this "one new man" in Christ, are represented as "reconciled to God in one Body by the cross;" terms which cannot be appliable to mere saints by courtesy. It seems the grossest violence to language to say that unconverted Jews, and unconverted Gentiles are "reconciled to God by the cross," and so made "one Body in Christ." These terms can comprehend none but true believers, who are one in the true Savior. Hence, in the passage before us, the converted Ephesians are called "no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints;" saints with saints, "and of the household of God;" "built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief Corner Stone." "In Him all the building," ALL, every stone and timber, from foundation to pinnacle, ALL is "fitly framed together;" and, thus framed, all "groweth," every part and particle, ALL groweth "unto an holy Temple in the Lord;" a Temple all "holy," and all "in the Lord;" all "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit;" and, through that Spirit, filled by its occupant in every part.

Such is the simple import of this passage, and of the Chapter in which it stands. It certainly describes the Church; for, in the immediate context, the object described is called the Church; and it as certainly describes a Church, every part of which is united to Christ by faith, in a vital and holy union; and, thus united, is saved by Him from sin and death. In making up this Temple, no account is taken of any other materials; no other materials are to be found in any part of the sacred edifice. It is built for GOD; and, "through the Spirit," God dwells in it; vitalizing, sanctifying, and finally glorifying every possible part. It is that Church which Christ filleth, "all in all."

This view is sustained by the true scriptural meaning of the word, Temple. In the sense of the Bible, what constitutes a Temple? Not a mere pile of hewn stone and cedar, overlaid with gold and silver. We, indeed, call such a structure a Temple; and, by this customary mode of speech, are too easily led to suppose that, in itself, it is a Temple. This,

however, is not true. Why was that wonderful edifice at Jerusalem a true Temple? Not because of its materiality or visibility, costliness or splendor; but because of God's indwelling. This indwelling makes any place, yea, any thing a Temple. Hence, when Jacob, on his way to Haran, was overtaken by the night, and made the stones of Luz his pillow, and the firmament of heaven his covering; and when, upon waking, he found that God had been specially with him, in communion and covenant, he said, "Surely, Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not." "How dreadful is this place! This is none other but the House of God; and this is the gate of heaven." He had been in a Temple, because he had been with God. It was an august Temple; and it shews us what, in the scriptural sense, the true, essential constituents of a Temple are.

For a like reason, the Body of Christ is a true Temple. When his hearers understood him to speak of destroying the Temple at Jerusalem, and building it in three days, we are told, "He spake of the Temple of His Body." It was a mysterious Temple; for in "Him was God manifest in the flesh." "In Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

This shews why even the Body of the individual Christian is a true Temple. "Know ye not that your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you?"* Through His indwelling, the body of each and every Christian believer is, in a true, though subordinate sense, like that of his Lord, a Temple for the habitation of God!

This takes us right into the meaning of the word, as it stands in the passage on which I am commenting. The company, or collection of individuals there described, are a Temple, because in each and every one "Christ dwelleth by faith." His dwelling in each separately, and thus in all collectively, makes them, collectively, what each is individually, a Temple, a wondrous Temple! "The Temple of the living God;" of God living in them, "dwelling in them, and walking in them;"

* I Cor. vi; 19.

He, "their God," and they "His people;" He, their "Father," and they, His "sons and daughters." It is only so far as they answer these terms, that they can be built into it, and help to constitute this glorious Temple of saints!

This Temple, in every part inhabited, this Church, in every member vitalized, by God, is identical with that "spiritual house," which St. Peter describes as built of "living stones" on the foundation of Christ, the "living stone." This edifice he immediately calls "a peculiar people," designed "to shew forth the praises of Him, who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light; which, in time past, were not a people; but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy; but now have obtained mercy."* It is eminently "a spiritual house," all alive with one life, from foundation to top-stone; the life of Christ living in every one of His members.

I have thus shewn that the idea of the Church, advanced in my first discourse, is distinctly found in several passages, which designedly describe the Church, under the various metaphors of a Fold, a Family, a Bride, a Body, and a Temple. One general observation, touching all these descriptions should be made.

A careful study of all the contexts will show that those who belong to the company, thus variously described, are continually exhorted to holiness and all fidelity, and as continually warned against sin and all unfaithfulness. A little reflection, however, will satisfy us that this makes nothing against the idea of the Church which I am illustrating. It argues not that the Church, thus exhorted and warned, is composed, in part, of impenitent men, men without faith, and with none of the elements of holiness. It but proves, what all admit, that true Christians then, like true Christians now, were not, of necessity, perfect in holiness at the first moment of their union with Christ; that they were too often needlessly imperfect; and that therefore they were proper subjects for the discipline of such grave instructions as they received.

* I Peter ii; 5, 9, 10.

The "Spiritual House," into which they were builded, was, in every part, a LIVE Temple. Spiritual life went out of the live rock, into every single stone built thereon; so that, what was lacking in each, was, not the living principle, but some of its fuller and higher actings; not the true nature of the holy materials, but some of their more finished and heavenly adornings.

The point immediately before us, then, is sufficiently clear. Various passages in the Inspired Word describe the Church under the precise idea of it, which I have advanced; an idea, which, in settling the essential marks of the one holy Catholic Church, knows nothing of any outward unity in submission to one temporal, human Head; an idea, which, in developing what is essential to the existence of the Church, is equally unacquainted with any indispensably necessary external unity in subordination to one Episcopacy with sacraments episcopally administered; an idea, in short, which, in unfolding the essential Being of the Church, holds forth Christ and life from Him by faith in the individual soul, as the very basis and substratum, yea, the very material and superstructure of that Church. This idea of Christ's holy Catholic Church, the Bible certainly gives; and, I apprehend, it is only because men have been so long familiar with a different, so long wedded, in truth, to a conflicting notion, that this seems, to any mind, strange, or, otherwise than based on the highest reason.

I say not that the Bible never uses the word, Church, in a looser sense; or that it never speaks of the Church as a being of external organization; or that it never describes a ministry and sacraments as gracious endowments of the Church. But, reserving these points for future examination, when I hope to shew them in a consistent light, what I say, for the present, is, that the first, highest, truest idea, which the Bible gives of the Church, is that, in which Christ, and individual union with Him by a true faith, with the result of growing spiritual life, constitute the very soul and body of the divine confederacy. The Church, in this idea of it, is a thing, not of changeful and perishable visibilities, but of permanent and imperishable spiritualities. It is essentially marked by just such inward

relations and affections, as are at once suggested to thought by the metaphors, under which we have seen it figured. The Fold, the Family, the Bride, the Body, the Temple; what things of life are these; and how full is each of divine affinities! What a Fold is that, of which Christ is Shepherd; what a Family, in which Christ is Father; what a Bride, to which Christ is Husband; what a Body, to which Christ is Head; and what a Temple, of which Christ is both Foundation-Stone and Cement! In the eye of the Bible, who is fit to be regarded in the light of a participant in these holy relationships? He is a sheep of Christ's Fold, who hears His voice and follows Him. He is one of Christ's Family, who is born unto Him by the Spirit through the Truth. He is part of Christ's Bride, who is espoused to Him in faith and holy love. He is a member of Christ's Body, who draws spiritual life, and feels a living control, from Him as Head. And he is in Christ's Temple, who is built on Him as the only Foundation, and grows, as by a sacred cement, to that, on which he is builded. He, who enters into these heavenly affinities, and is held by them, and he only, comes within the scope and embrace of such passages as have been examined; and all who do thus enter, and are thus held in affinity with Christ, do also come within the scope and embrace of those passages; by whatever outward name they may be known, in whatever varying clime they may be found, and under whatever outward disadvantages they may labor. Nothing but these affinities can make up the Body of the true and "holy Catholic Church;" and nothing can cut off from this Body, where these affinities really exist. In the visible Church, as we shall hereafter see, outward institutions of ministry and sacraments have their true place, and are invested with their full importance. They bind us, as things of order and as means of grace; but they bind not God as essentials to Christian life and to incorporation into Christ. His one spiritual and holy Church is the result of His working, by whatever means; and when, by His working, it is gathered into Christ, nothing can cut off from it, but what, at the same time, separates from Christ himself.

As yet, however, I have examined but one of the two sets

of passages, which I have mentioned as sustaining this idea of the Church; those describing it under certain metaphors. I have still to examine those, which present it under its own proper name, THE CHURCH.

In the meantime, while I am developing the idea before us, I have to ask two things; that my readers will not conclude hastily against this view; and that they will not, beforehand, write me down as no Churchman, because I have undertaken to develope the idea which this view involves. If they wait for what I have yet to say, I trust they will see that this view is really sustained by our own standards, as well as by the Bible; while, when I come to speak of the Church as an outward organization, I hope they will be able to perceive, still more clearly, how the view, thus sustained, is in perfect keeping with all good fidelity and affection to the Zion of our own tried loyalty and love.

May God bless what has thus far been said, to the filling of all our hearts with life from Christ.

DISCOURSE III.

"Even as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."—Ephesians v; 25-27.

The Church, in its comprehension, has already occupied us through two discourses. In the first, after stating that definition of the Holy Catholic Church which restricts it to the Romish Communion, and that which extends it to all, who enjoy an Episcopal ministry and sacraments, I proceeded to seek a third idea of this Holy Catholic Church, or of the Church in its true comprehension; and, in doing so, I arrived at the conclusion that it embraces all, of whatever name, who have an individual union with Christ by a true faith; that whole company of the saved, who, through this faith in Christ, are made holy, and become inheritors of eternal life. In the second discourse, I proposed to shew that this idea of the Church is sustained by the Bible; and to this end proceeded to examine two separate sets of passages; the one presenting the Church under certain metaphors; the other presenting it under its own proper name. Of these two sets of passages, the former only has thus far been examined. I enter now on an examination of the latter.

II. Passages which present the Church under its own proper name.

It is important to make this examination, because, however clearly the Church, as described by metaphors, was found to correspond with the idea now before us, it is still contended, that in all cases where the word, Church, is used, it designates an outward and mixed body, composed, in part, of true believ-

ers, and, in part, of hypocrites, self-deceivers and apostates: or, that, in the Bible, the word, Church, always designates a visible and organized society, with its officers, sacraments, and mixed body of members. Now, if this be true, it will apparently invalidate the interpretation, already put on the metaphors, by which the Church is described. But, if it be not true, if there be passages in which the word Church carries the same sense with the interpreted metaphors, then will the interpretation put upon those metaphors be made certain, and the doctrine of the Church, which I maintain, be established. What, then, is the truth on this point?

I begin my reply by admitting, as I have already done, that in the Bible, the word, Church, is often used to designate a visible, and even an organized society; the reason why, I will shew in its proper place: for the present, the fact of such use is freely admitted. Yet I maintain that this is not the true primitive sense of the word; and that there are various passages which fully sustain the idea of the Church, as already deduced from an examination of metaphoric terms, and as indicated by this true primitive sense of the word itself.

In ascertaining this true sense, it will be important to remember, that the word, Ecclesia, generally translated Church, means simply an assembly; an aggregate of individuals; and has so absolutely nothing to do with organization, rules and constitution of government, that it may be applied to a tumultuous gathering, a very mob; and that, to designate a lawful, or organized body, it at first needed an adjective joined with it to express the quality of lawfulness, or organization. In itself, it means simply assembly, an aggregate of individuals. Thus we see in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts, when St. Paul was preaching at Ephesus, and when the Ephesians, thinking the honor of their goddess Diana in peril, and being excited to rage by the crafty silversmith, Demetrius, "rushed," rabble-like, "into the theatre," and for "two hours" shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians;" though "the whole city was filled with confusion," and "the more part knew not wherefore they were come together," save to threaten violence to the Christians, yet this very mob, the most disorderly of its kind, was called an Ecclesia. "The Ecclesia," says the sacred

writer, "was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together." And, finally, when "the Town Clerk" had succeeded in "appeasing the people," he is said to have "dismissed the Ecclesia:" telling them, at the same time, that if they had any really actionable matter against the Christians, it "should be determined in a lawful assembly;" (εν τῃ εννομῳ εκκλησια.)

The word itself, therefore, though generally translated Church, yet means simply an assembly, without any reference to visible organization and government: and when used to designate an organized body, it originally needed an adjective to express the quality of organization. It was probably by use, that, as applied to Christians, the adjective was dropped, and the word Ecclesia alone came to designate a visibly organized body. Primarily, as applied to the Disciples, it meant simply an assembly of Christians, without reference to any visible bond of unity and government; just the aggregate of true believers in Christ, spiritually united to, and in Him.*

* In Acts vii; 38, "Ecclesia" is applied to the Hebrews in the wilderness: and in Matt. xviii; 17, to those who were to hear complaints against offenders.

But, in Acts vii; 38, it seems to be used of the aggregate of individuals, under the special guidance of God, and constituting the politico-thocratic state of the Hebrew people; and not of a Church, in our ecclesiastical sense of the term, under full visible organization, and delegated human government. The Ecclesia of saints, or company of holy believers, was then, as now, in existence. But at that time, the word Ecclesia was applied to the people living under the Hebrew polity, a pure theocracy, or state under the immediate government of God. The Church, in our ordinary sense, as visible and separate, or distingisuhable from the State, did not exist. Religious worship, with priest and sacrifices, was maintained; but it was an appendage of the theocratic state, rather than of a separately existing Church. The whole people were called "the congregation"—the "ecclesia"—the aggregate of the individuals of the state. If it be contended that the Church, as a peculiar visible organization, under appointed officers, was then in existence and action, it must also be admitted that that Church was all in all; that the state, as such, did not exist; and that a Hebrew state, silently absorbing this visible Church into itself, subsequently took its origin in the appointment of the first king. I confess that, to my mind, the Hebrew polity in the wilderness, as well as in Canaan, appears more like a religious state, a social theocracy, carrying among its individuals the elements of the spiritual Church, than like a visible Church, existing to the exclusion of the state. Acts vii; 38, would have been properly rendered—"He that was in the congregation," or "assembly," in the wilderness.

In Matt. xviii; 17, it is argued, an organized visible Church must be intended,

As Christians multiplied, however, they gradually became a more and more perfectly organized body; and then the word which had described them in their unorganized state, seems to have been adopted as their name in an organized capacity; and the Ecclesia became a thing of rules and government, as well as of common union in Christ. But, originally, this common union of an assembly, or aggregate of individuals, with Christ was evidently, when used in a religious sense, its true idea. Let us now look at the passages, in which the word seems used in this sense.

1. I cite, first, Matt. xvi; 18. "Upon this rock I will build MY CHURCH; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

This, the reader is aware, is the very passage, on which Rome relies for establishing her exclusive claim as the one visible and Holy Catholic Church; inasmuch as, in her view, it upholds the claim of her Bishop to universal supremacy, as successor to St. Peter, and sole vicar of Christ on earth. To support this claim, she interprets the whole passage thus: "Thou art Peter," a rock; "and, on this rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it:"* thus making Peter virtually the foundation of the Church; constituting for the Church one head on earth; and making union with that head necessary.

Now, even if this interpretation were, in principle, correct, it would yield no support to the claims of Rome and her

with power to constitute itself a court, for the trial and punishment of offenders. But this is the seed of a monstrous evil. The idea of a Christian Church, with authority to try offences, and to punish by the infliction of positive penalty, is anti-christian, and has done incalculable mischief. Christ's words imply no more than this: "If thy brother offend thee, and will not listen to the private advice of two or three friends, nor to that of an "assembly" of the brethren, then withdraw from his company, and have no more to do with him than with a heathen or a publican." This, I believe, is all the power of discipline that Christ ever intended should be exercised by his disciples: the power of simply separating, or withdrawing themselves from all fellowship with incorrigibly unworthy professors of his name and Gospel.—(Vide, II Thess. iii; 6—15: 1 Tim. vi; 3—5: I Cor. v; 1—13.)

Some understand by Ecclesia, in Matt. xviii; 17, the Jewish Sanhedrim, as a legal tribunal. This, of course, would take from the word all reference to the Church.

* See Encyclopœdia Americana, Vol. x. p. 253. Art. "Pope, *by a Catholic.*"

Bishop, unless they could prove, what history furnishes no trustworthy means of proving, that St. Peter was the first Bishop, or ever a Bishop, of that Church. But, as my present concern is with the interpretation of the Bible, and not with history, I proceed to show that the foregoing interpretation is not correct, but evidently groundless.

Christ, then, had just asked his Disciples—"Who do men say that I am?" And, on being told that some called him "John the Baptist," while others believed him to be "Elias," and others still "Jeremias," or "one of the prophets;" he inquired again; "But who say YE that I am?" To this question, addressed to them all, Simon, ever prompter than the rest, replied, "Thou art THE CHRIST, the Son of the Living God." Jesus immediately added, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee; but my Father who is in Heaven."

Now follows that part of the passage which I have quoted; and, in order to show more clearly the entire groundlessness of the exposition to which I have adverted, I will give the two main words of what follows in their original Greek. "And I say unto thee," thou man of heaven-taught courage, "thou art *Petros*," a stone; "and upon this *Petra*," this rock, "I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." "No devastations of death and the grave shall ever extinguish it; and no subtlety or malice of the devil or of man shall ever prevail to move it from its immovable foundation."

Upon the passage thus placed before us, I remark; had Christ designed to constitute Simon the foundation and head of His Church on earth, He would doubtless have said: "Thou art *Petros*; and on this *Petros* I will build my Church; and thus built on thee, nothing shall ever prevail against it." This, however, He did not say: He changed the main word in the sentence; and, by the change, intimated that he was pointing, not to Simon, but to something else, as the foundation and head of His impregnable Church. What was that something else? To understand this, bear in mind, Simon, under divine teaching, had just confessed—"Thou art the Christ, the Son

of the Living God." This revelation—Jesus, the Anointed, the Only Begotten of the Living God; this, the most elementary fact in Christianity, the very corner-stone of the Christian faith, the very life of the Gospel and the Church—was the grand disclosure which the dialogue had elicited, the weighty theme which then filled all their minds! How infinitely improbable, then, is it that Christ, while His soul was thus laboring, and while the minds of his Disciples were thus filled, with the grandest birth of His own revelation, turned instantly away from Himself, the very starting point and goal of His own inquiries, and brought forward Simon as a main object of regard; a man bold and inspired, it is true, yet still rash and changeful; and that such a Speaker, on such an occasion, finished His solemn announcement by declaring that He would build His eternally immovable Church on the foundation of a weak and unstable creature! I repeat, nothing can be more groundless than such an exposition of this passage. Its true meaning is: "Thou art *Petros*, a stone, a bold man, speaking as my Father hath taught; and, in the face of a hostile world, confessing ME to be the CHRIST, the Son of the Living God. On this rock, this *Petra* which thou hast confessed—that is, on MYSELF, as 'the Anointed, the Begotten of the Living God,' on *this* rock I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. For I am He that 'hath the keys of hell and of death;'* I, therefore, by its resting on myself, will keep my Church against the power of both!"

To clear the truth of this meaning, look at subsequent revelations, which Christ sent by His great Apostle: "Our Fathers," said St. Paul, "were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat of the same spiritual meat, and did all drink of the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock, *Petra*, was Christ!"† "Other Foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."‡ Here, then, is the rock, the very "*Petra*," by name, of which Jesus was speaking;

* Rev. i; 18. † I Cor. x; 1—4. ‡ I Cor. iii; 11.

Christ Himself, the only foundation of His Church. This, doubtless, is the very foundation under the figure of which their own prophets had predicted Christ: "Behold I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." That is; 'whoso rests by faith on this Divine Rock shall never be moved. Nothing on earth, or in hell, shall ever move him.' This, imbodying the very idea of Matt. xvi. 18, was the language of their own Scriptures; with this the Disciples were doubtless familiar; this, therefore, we may well conclude, furnished the key to the meaning of their Divine Master, when He said, "On this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." They needed no labored exposition in words; they needed not, what some have conjectured that He used, even a silent motion of His hand towards His own bosom, to guide them in catching His meaning, when He uttered those living truths, and proclaimed HIMSELF* alone the Eternal Foundation, Safeguard, and Keeper of His own spiritual and believing Church!

The argument, in brief, stands thus:—Isaiah, speaking by that "spirit of prophecy" which is "the testimony of Jesus," foretells Christ as the foundation of a believing and immovable Church: Christ Himself, whose inspiration was in that prophet, calls the foundation of His Church, *Petra:* and Paul, speaking by revelation from the same Inspirer, declares that this *Petra* was Christ. This is light from the Bible. The *Petra*, in Matt. xvi; 18, is not Simon, but Christ Himself; and the words of Jesus to His Disciple mean precisely this: "I call thee *Petros*, because thou hast boldly confessed ME, the true *Petra*, 'the Anointed Son of the living

* Since writing these discourses, I have met with the following comment on this celebrated text, from the Irenicum of Stillingfleet: "For, indeed, was the Church built upon St. Peter? then he must be chief foundation stone; and Peter must build upon himself, and not upon Christ, and all the Apostles upon him; and thus, in exalting the servant, we depress the Master; and in setting a new foundation, we take away the only foundation, Jesus Christ." Again: "The rock then spoken of by Christ in his speech to Peter, if taken doctrinally, was St. Peter's confession; as many of the Father's interpret it; if taken personally, it was none but CHRIST HIMSELF, who used a like speech to this, when He said, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up'" John ii; 19.

God;' and on this *Petra* I will build my Church; that living Temple of believers which shall never be moved."

In what I have thus said, the reader will perceive, it has been my aim not merely to expose a groundless interpretation of the passage before us, but also to bring to view Christ, as the foundation of the true Church. Isaiah foretells a foundation, on which whosoever believeth, builds and is safe; and Christ proclaims Himself a rock, on which is built a Church not to be moved by all the assaults of hell. What sort of a Church, then, is this? I answer; it is a Church which CHRIST builds, not *man*. "On this rock *I* will build *My* Church." Christ is builder here, and only Christ. He is truly a builder. Not only does He constitute the true foundation; but He really and ceaselessly works in building on that foundation. He does all the work in the building. By His Spirit and His Truth He lays every stone that is used in the process. "On this Rock *I* will build *My* Church." Here is no mistake, no fallibility, no human infirmity, in selecting and arranging materials. All is done with a Divine master-workman's knowledge and skill. Christ selects every part and builds it into the whole sacred Temple. And He never builds upon Himself, and into union with Himself, the souls of unbelieving, hypocritical, or self-deceiving men. He builds with those only, who accept His invitation, "come to Him" by faith and find "rest unto their souls;" those only, who live and walk in Him, and who are thus "rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith." This it is, that makes His Church immovable. Against the Church, in a merely visible sense, the gates of Hell have oft prevailed. By the floods which have poured through those open gates, the Churches of Jerusalem and Antioch, the Church of Africa, and the Seven Churches of Proconsular Asia, have all been swept away. The same has virtually happened to all the other and later Churches of the East; mere fragments of them standing, as if to make their desolations the more visible. While, as to even the Great Western Church of the seven hilled city, though those wasteful floods leave her still standing in imposing magnitude, yet have they filled her with their own deep impurities, and prevailed to

make her the grand enemy of the Gospel. But, the true Church of Christ, the Church of all believers, the Church which He has built and is building, the Church which He is cementing to Himself in faith from all names and all nations, this has never been moved; against this the floods from the gates of hell have beaten and shall forever beat, in vain. Against this they never have prevailed, and never shall prevail. For this rests on Christ; this Christ keeps safe from every storm.

Such, then, I humbly venture to conclude, is the true sense of this famous passage from the teachings of Chist. In looking for the meaning of such very peculiar language, avowedly intended to draw HIMSELF into view, and that, in His most essential, Divine and life-giving office, it is infinitely below the subject to suppose that He ends by merely presenting His Church, as founded on a fallible creature, and built by an imperfect human ministry, sent forth, in all their infirmity of judgment, to gather into an outward society all sorts of men; the believing and the unbelieving, the holy and the unholy; united, as such heterogeneous elements must necessarily be, by mere visible bonds in a mere external organization. Nothing can come up to the nature and design of the occasion and the discourse, but that which considers Him as presenting Himself, "the Anointed Son of the Living God," the living and the life-giving Savior, building His own Spiritual Church on Himself; by His Word and Spirit calling, teaching and drawing believing hearts and sanctified souls into vital union with Himself; and thus constituting them in Himself an impregnable and immovable Church; the great spiritual "assembly" of those, who "have received Christ Jesus the Lord," who "walk in Him," and are "rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith."* This is Christ's work as Builder; and those only, who are effectual subjects of this work, are members of that Church, which He builds on Himself, never to be moved.

I have dwelt longer than I intended on this passage; but its importance justifies the notice, which it has received. I will

* Col. ii; 6, 7.

only add, that, at the time when Christ uttered these words, no distinctly Christian organization existed; and therefore the word Church, or Ecclesia, here must mean, either, 1, the Spiritual Church of which I have spoken, the Holy Assembly of all in all ages, who are saved in Christ; or, 2, the then visible Church under the Jewish Dispensation, followed by its successor, afterwards to be gathered from among Gentile nations; although the Jewish portion was then about to crucify the Son of God, while the Gentile has often been guilty of "crucifying Him afresh, and putting Him to an open shame." Was it, then, in this latter, this visible sense, that Christ, on so peculiar an occasion, spoke of building His Church on Himself, and with such a firmness of union that it should never be moved? The Jewish organization has fallen; and numerous threatenings against guilty Gentile organizations have long since been executed in the ruin which has engulfed them. No! The Church built on Christ has another character, and shares another destiny.

2. I cite, next, Acts ii; 47, "And the Lord added daily to THE CHURCH such as should be saved; literally; "The Lord daily added the saved, τοὺς σωζομένους, to the Church."

This, also, was spoken before the first elements of distinctly Christian organization had appeared. As a "communion of Saints," indeed, the Church, the "Ecclesia," had existed from the beginning, and was then in true being. A peculiar Jewish organization also, under the form of a Theocratic State, had long been known, though it was then passing out of life. But, as a distinctly visible Christian organization, the Church, as we understand the term, had scarcely begun to develope itself.

The sense of the passage, just recited, may be thus given: "The Lord daily increased the assembly, 'the Ecclesia,' by the numbers which were saved." The increase of the Church was in exact proportion to the increase of "the saved." No other element of it seems to have been then in view. The Church, here described, was evidently the simple aggregate of individuals, saved in Christ Jesus. The Spiritual Church, "the

Communion of Saints," the Ecclesia of the Saved, is the all-comprehending idea.

3. Again; in Ephesians, i; 22, 23, occurs the passage which was noticed in explaining the metaphor of a Temple. Speaking of the supreme dominion of Christ, the Apostle says; The Father "gave him to be Head over all to THE CHURCH which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

In seeking the true idea of the Church, of which Christ is here called the Head, it is important to observe the class of persons, of whom, in this part of his Epistle, the writer is speaking. He had just been speaking, then, of "The hope of Christ's calling;" and of "The riches of the glory of His Inheritance in the Saints;" and of "The greatness of His power to-us-ward, who believe:" and then, having penned the passage before us, he immediately proceeds to speak of those, who having been "dead in trepasses and sins," were at length, unlike all the rest of a dead world, "quickened together with Christ, and raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places," or relations, "in Christ Jesus." It must, therefore, be allowed that the persons, whom the Apostle had in his mind, when he here used the word, Church, were the renewed subjects of Christ's mighty and saving power through the Gospel. His whole discourse, in this part, teems with the loftiest possible conceptions of the character and privileges of those, who thus belong, in faith and holiness, to Christ. These conceptions lie all round the word, Church, as here used; they enter into that word, and imbody themselves alone in the idea, to which the name, Church, is here given. This Church imbodies "hope of Christ's calling;" this Church is "His Inheritance in the Saints;" this Church displays "the exceeding greatness of His power towards them that believe;" this is the Church which, in the true sense, constitutes "His Body;" and to this, by a divine affinity, He is united as "Head." This is the true "Fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

These last words evidently fix this idea, as the true sense of the term, Church, in this place; "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." The Church is here called "the fulness of Christ," not because He is permanently incarnate in the Church, by the

presence and communication of His real Body and Blood, but, because, without His Church, He is pleased to consider Himself incomplete, wanting the most important of the "Principalities and powers," that are subject unto Him. This Church is the COMPLEMENT, or FULNESS, of Himself; that, which renders Him complete or full in His spiritual dominion. A king must have a kingdom; and a head a body. The idea of the one would be incomplete without the other. A kingdom, therefore, may be called the complement, or fulness, of a king; and a body, the complement, or fulness, of a Head. In this sense, the Church is "the fulness of Christ." It is that body, without which the very idea of His headship would be incomplete. Hence, His Apostle declares: "Ye are *complete* in Him, which is *the Head* of all principality and power."* What, then, is the character of that Body, which is thus Christ's "fullness?" Are wicked men, baptized unbelievers and hypocrites, part of Christ's fulness? Is the idea of His headship incomplete without them?

It might, indeed, be said, that the Church, necessary to complete the idea of Christ's Headship, is one, which may contain some false and dead members; and that therefore a mixed Church may here be described as "the fulness of Christ."—But, as if to shew the inadmissibility of this construction, the expression is made still more peculiar; "the fulness of Him, that filleth all in all." Taken in its connexion, this is not a mere general assertion of Christ's omnipresence, and all-sustaining Providence in the world; but a special declaration of His indwelling and nurture of His whole Church. He fills this Church "all in all:" that is; He fills all the members of His true, mystical Body with all spiritual grace; with all that is necessary to the perfecting of the divine whole. The Church is His "Fulness;" and He thus fills the Church "all in all." There is no member of the Church as here intended, whom He does not ultimately fill with "all spiritual grace and benediction."

4. In a similar sense is the word used in the third chapter of this same Epistle, (vs. 10, 20, 21.) Immediately after his beautiful description of the Church, already noticed under the

* Col. ii; 10.]

metaphor of a Temple, the Apostle returns to the literal use of the word, Church, and, in his peculiarly elevated strain, declares that "God created all things by Jesus Christ, to the intent that now, unto the Principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be" made "known by THE CHURCH the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." And then, as a Doxology to that most sublime prayer, which closes the chapter, he adds; "And now, unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, to Him be glory in THE CHURCH by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end."

Literally, this last expression runs; "To Him be glory in the Church in Christ Jesus; the grammatic turn of the language being precisely like that in Acts vii; 38; where Moses is called; "He that was in the Church in the wilderness."*

"To Him be glory in the Church, which is in Christ Jesus;" the Church which is in Him truly, and by a divine affinity.— A visible and mixed Church is not, as a whole, truly in Christ. Only a part of it, true and sanctified believers, is thus in Him. But the whole Church, here presented, is in Christ. It is "The Church in Christ Jesus." It is, therefore, the spiritual and holy, in distinction from a visible and mixed, Church, of which the Apostle speaks. This alone comes up, fully and justifyingly, to the amazing strength of the language used. This alone is the Church, which "now makes known, and will forever and ever make known, to the heavenly Principalities and powers, the manifold wisdom of God." This alone was a Body fit to be comprehended in God's "eternal purpose, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

5. A passage, parallel in import with the last two, is seen in the first chapter of Col. (9, 29). The Apostle is there speaking of those, whom God had "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light;" whom He "had delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son;" who had been "alienated and enemies in their

* "ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ"
"εν τῇ εκκλησίᾳ ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ"

minds by wicked works," but whom Christ "had now reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present them holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight;" and to whom, as "Saints," God had "made manifest" "the glory of His mystery among the Gentiles, which was, Christ in them the hope of glory." This whole body is represented as "reconciled" to God "through the blood of the Cross; and as existing, like the Spiritual Family formerly described, "whether in Earth or in Heaven." In the very midst of these strong expressions, exclusively descriptive of the Saints and of the Evangelic kingdom of Christ, the Apostle brings in the same idea as before of Christ's supreme dominion over heavenly Principalities and powers; of His creation of all things; and of the Father's pleasure "that in Him should all fulness dwell:" and it is while uttering all this that Paul says of Christ; "He is the Head of the Body—THE CHURCH:" while he professes, for Himself, to "rejoice in His sufferings for" the Saints, and in "filling up in his flesh that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ, for His Body's sake, which is THE CHURCH." It must be admitted, then, that the Word, Church, here, means the whole aggregate, in heaven and earth, of the saints. The very idea of the Church, as here presented, is simply a complex, or collection of the Holy ones described. In what is said, there is nothing to suggest any other comprehension, or character, of this divinely mystical Body of Christ.

6. I come now to the passage placed at the head of this discourse (Eph. v; 25–27); "Even as Christ also loved THE CHURCH and gave Himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious CHURCH, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

If the Church here mentioned be the visible Church, composed of all the Baptized, we shall be driven to admit, as multitudes strenuously claim, that all the Baptized are saved; and that, in order to their salvation, a Purgatory is necessary to purify the myriads of them, who die under all the defilements of sin. For, that the Church, which this

passage describes, is all saved, is manifest from what precedes, as well as from the passage itself. The words occur in the midst of an exhortation to husbands and wives. "The husband," says the Apostle, "is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church: and He is the Savior of the Body." That is: marriage is a sacred symbol of the union between Christ and the Church. With the Church as here intended, Christ holds a living and Spiritual affinity. His union with it is saving, "He is the Savior of the Body." The whole Body, of which He is the Saviour, is identical with the whole Church, of which he is the Head. As no part of the Body, of which He is Savior, is lost; so, no member of the Church, of which He is thus the Head, perishes. His Headship in it is vital, sanctifying, saving. And so it follows; He "loved this Church," all of it, "and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word;" or, by the sanctifying and cleansing power of the Spirit and the Truth, as predicted under the figures of sprinkling and pouring clean water on the people of God;* and "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church; not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Such is the Church of which St. Paul says, "Christ is the Savior of the Body." In other words; the Church, here intended, is the Body of the saved in Christ Jesus. Can it, then, be admitted, that he is here speaking of the visible Church, composed of all the Baptized? Is Christ the Savior of this Body, taken as a whole? We cannot receive a proposition so evidently untrue. And yet, the Church, in this passage, is just that Body, of which, taken as a whole, Christ is the Savior. The Apostle, therefore, is not speaking of the visible Church of the Baptized, but of the spiritual Church of the saved.

7. The well-known passage (I Tim. iii; 15), is, also, by some of our old writers, understood in the same sense: "That thou mightest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the House" (or household) "of God; which is THE CHURCH of the living God; the pillar and ground of the Truth."

* Ezek. xxxvi; 25–27. Isa. xliv; 3.

Speaking in the style of those old writers, we should say: the Church, here named, is the live Church of the living God. As such, it is really "the pillar and ground of the Truth." It receives, exhibits and supports the Truth, always, in its purity and its entireness. Nothing, short of its Divine Head, is so precious to it, as this Truth, loftily held up, and unwaveringly sustained. Death is sweeter to this Church than treason to the Truth. This cannot be said of the Church as a visible and mixed Body. In this character, it has often rejected, and oftener still corrupted or concealed, the true and saving Word of God. It is only the live Church of Christ, that always retains, magnifies and preserves the pure Word of His living Truth.

8. Again, in Heb. ii; 10–12, we have this remarkable language: "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings; for both He that sanctifieth and they that are sanctified, are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren: saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of THE CHURCH will I sing praise unto thee."

Here, the meaning of the word, Church, appears unconcealably manifest. God proposes to Himself a vast object; the "bringing of many sons to glory," the salvation of the great company of Holy ones: He furnishes the means of securing this vast object, by "making the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings," the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God: He educes the result of the whole, in the one sacred family of Him that sanctifieth, and them that are sanctified. And then, this sanctifying Savior appears among them, calling them His Brethren, His Spiritual Kin, and naming them the Church, in the midst of which He is to praise the gracious Father of this whole plan and consumation. Here, the word, Church, is palpably a mere synonym for the blessed company of those whom Christ calls His "Brethren"; His brethren, not only in that He shares with them their human nature, but in that they share with Him His Spiritual Life. And carrying back the thought through the sentence; this company of brethren with Christ are but identical with that

one sacred family, of the Sanctifier and the sanctified; as these, in their turn, are but identical with that bright army of "sons," whom, under the victorious "Captain of their salvation," God is, from age to age, "bringing to glory." The passage presents us with but one Company, though under different names; so that what comes out as the Church in the last, is but another term for the Sons of Glory in the first, of these significant expressions.

9. I have but one further passage to cite. It is, however, if possible, more decisive of the point before us than even that just considered. It is in Heb. xii; 22–24. "Ye are come," says the Apostle, not to Mount Sinai, but "to Mount Zion, unto the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem; even to an innumerable company of angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the first born, written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Here light shines, as with a perfect demonstration, on the point, which I am illustrating. "The Mount Zion, the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem," are but different synonyms for the whole Communion and fellowship of God's holy subjects; consisting (as our hymn expresses the idea), of "Angels and living saints and dead;" or (as the words, just read, import), of "the innumerable company of angels," the "General Assembly and Church of the First-born, written in heaven," and the "Spirits of just men made perfect;" the whole in subjection to "God, the Judge of all, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant." With Angels, as one part of this great Communion, our argument is not specially concerned. Our interest, at present, is with the other part, "Living Saints and dead." These, together, make up "the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven" while living on earth, and which, upon reaching Heaven, become "Spirits of the just made perfect;" as this Church, together with "the innumerable company of Angels," makes up "the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem."

Here, then, is the Church in the very idea of it, which we

have been seeking; the whole "Assembly," on earth and in heaven, of saved and glorified souls. It is not the Church as it will be after the Judgment Day; but the Church, as it now is, consisting of those saints, who live in the flesh, and of those who live only in the spirit. And, to this Church every true believer comes, when he comes by a living faith to Christ. "Ye are come to the General Assembly and Church of the first born."*

We may as well say that, not till after the Judgment, do true believers "come to God, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling;" as to say that they do not come into this Church till that time. Because part of this Church is in Heaven, that is no reason why we may not enter it on earth. We must enter it on earth, or we never shall enter it in Heaven. True believers "come now to God;" they come, in this life, "to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant," and to the precious "blood of sprinkling;" and they come in this life even "to the innumerable company of Angels, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect," considered as parts of "the Heavenly Jerusalem," or of the universal fellowship of the holy. They come to all these now, in the faith, that makes them one in Christ; in the realizing of Life Eternal, begun already in their souls; and in the inner sealings of the Spirit, "whereby they are sealed unto the Day of Redemption." These are all present realities; the earthly privileges of their "citizenship in Heaven;" the seals of their heirship, yea, their joint heirship with Christ, of the full and glorious inheritance of His Everlasting Kingdom. They wait not for these things, in dubious gloom, till the darkness of the grave be passed. The light of them shines full on their blessed lot in the land of the living. All these things, however, are no more surely God's Truth than is this other; that true Chris-

* It is, to me, quite surprising that McKnight renders Heb. xii; 22–24, ("Ye *are* come unto Mount Zion, etc.") by "Ye *shall* come, etc.," on the ground, that we cannot be said to come now "to the Heavenly Jerusalem;" that advent being a yet future event. He Hebraistically changes a Greek præterite into a future tense; though the very obvious sense, which I have given, rendered such a violent resort needless.

tians come now to this "General Assembly and Church of the First-born." The names of all the members of this Church are "written in Heaven," while they sojourn on earth; and the Church, to which they thus belong, hath a life, which, at the same time, touches and animates every Saint below, and every Saint above.

This, then, is the Church of Christ, in its essence, and in its true comprehension. The Bible teaches this doctrine of the Church. Every soul that hath true faith in Christ and is saved, is a member of the true Church of Christ, of His Church in its most essential characteristics; and this idea of His Church is unspeakably more important than all that men can conceive of outward splendor, or even of visible unity.

I close here my examination of passages in support of the definition of the Church with which I started. All the metaphors illustrated, and all the texts of literal import explained, are filled with light from this last description of the Church. They all come together and find their full expression in this one graphic outline of the true Church of Christ, as it now exists on earth and in heaven.

What remains on this part of the subject, and before proceeding to consider the Church in its more visible aspects, is, to notice some objections to the view which has been taken; to show its importance in Christian theology, and to compare it with our own standards, and what may be termed, the standard writers of our Protestant Reformation. To these points, therefore, I propose to pass in my next discourse.

DISCOURSE IV.

"Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.—John x; 26."

It was one of the strong features of the Protestant Reformation, that it drew into prominence that long hidden idea of the Church, which it has been the object of these discourses to present. "The Church," said one of the teachers of that great age, "is the congregation," the assembly, the ecclesia, "of those who are united by the same Spirit, the same faith, the same God, the same Mediator, the same Word; by which alone they are governed, and in which alone they have life."* A modern historian of that age speaks thus: "Undoubtedly the Lord has left His Church outward seals of His grace; but He has not attached salvation to these signs. The essential point is, the connexion of the faithful with the Word, with the Holy Ghost, with the Head of the Church. This is the great truth, which the Reform proclaims."† The opposite doctrine had tended to generate, at least in the common mind, the idea that "the Church saves." It was the great work of Reformation to bring out, into proper distinctness, the truth that "Christ alone saves;" and that His true Church is just the Body, or Communion of those whom He saves.

I. But, against this idea of the Church it is objected, that it rests on the distinction between what has been called the Visible and the Invisible Church. This distinction, it is contended, is groundless. To many Christians, the thought of

* Vide D'Aubigne's Hist. Ref., vol. iv. p. 34. † Ibid., vol. iv. p. 107.

giving the name, Church, to the simple aggregate of those who believe in Christ unto eternal life, and whose hearts are, with certainty, known to God only, is even positively distasteful.

But, why should this be? That there is a great company, composed exclusively of saints, or true believers in Christ made holy; that He is, in the truest sense, their Spiritual, or Mystical Head; and that they are, in the truest sense, His Spiritual, or Mystical Body; these are things as certain as that there are a Bible and a Savior. Why, then, should not the name, Church, be given to what is thus, in reality, a Church, to the holy company thus constituting one Mystical Body and Head? It has been shown, as I humbly venture to think, that, to this holy Communion, the name, Church, is given by Inspiration itself. The Bible, it is true, speaks of visible and organized bodies, as Churches. Such were the Seven Churches of the Lesser Asia, and other distinct Christian organizations. But, it also speaks of the Body of the Saved, of true believers in Christ, as the Church; and therefore justifies the distinction between the Visible and the Spiritual Church. These are not, indeed, two separate and independent Bodies, without any mutual relation. The one is included in the other; as the wheaten kernels are contained in the straw and husks. Still, the two are distinguishable and ought never to be confounded. A field of the growing grain, considered as one whole, is called wheat. So, too, is a measure of the pure, clean kernel, called wheat. And it is the true wheat. It is that which gives name to the whole crop, taken together. This whole is called wheat, for the simple reason that, among it, the true wheat is found. Is this making the straw and the husk of no value? By no means. They are highly important. They minister externally to the protection of the kernel. Yet, they are not wheat; and when the kernel is ripe, they are separated and cast aside. In like manner, the whole visible, organized Body is called the Church. So, too, is the great Communion of Saints, taken separately, called the Church. And it is, in the truest sense, the Church. It is that, which gives name to the visible, and organized Society. This visible Society is called, the Church, for the simple reason that,

within it the true Church is ordinarily found. Nor is this to disparage the Church, as a visible and organized Society. This Society is of great importance. In relation to the true Spiritual Church, it discharges various and highly beneficial offices. Yet, it is not, in the highest sense, the Church; and, in the sight of God, many of its members are seen to have none but a nominal connexion with the true Mystic Body of Christ.

But, there are particular expressions in Scripture, which imply this distinction between the Visible and the Spiritual Church. The passage, John x; 26, is one. "Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." The Jews, here addressed, claimed to be true descendants of Abraham; they even claimed God as their Father;* and they were members of the Visible Church, so far as the Church then visibly existed. Yet, Christ tells them they were not "of His Sheep," as He had before told them they were "of their Father, the Devil."† Notwithstanding their membership in the Visible Church, they were not of Christ's Sheep; not of His true Fold; not of His true Church. There were then, as well as now, both the Visible and the Spiritual Church; and Christ knew perfectly the distinction, as well as the connexion, between the two.

The language of St. Paul goes to the same point. "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but, he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart; in the spirit and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."‡ "'They are not all Israel, who are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children." "That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the Seed."§ "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."‖

Here, the distinction between the Visible and the Spiritual Israel, between the Visible and the Spiritual Church, is palpable. Membership in the Spiritual body is constituted, not by a mere "outward" bond, but by a Divine, "in-

* John viii; 33–42. † John viii; 43, 44. ‡ Rom. ii; 28, 29.
§ Rom. ix; 6–8. ‖ Gal. iii; 7.

ward" work; "the circumcision of the heart; in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." "The children of the Promise," they, who, inheriting Abraham's faith, have the bond of a spiritual kindred with Abraham; these, and these only, "are counted for the seed." In making up the true family of Christ, the chosen "seed," none but these are "counted;" none but these are taken into Heaven's reckoning. The real Israel, the true Church of Christ, never has been, and never will be composed of any but this really believing and holy seed.

I have referred, very briefly, to the foregoing expressions, to show that the Bible recognizes the distinction, as a vital one, between the Visible and the Spiritual Church; and that, therefore, when we recognize and hold up the distinction, we are not following a mere floating illusion of our own brain, but are grasping one of the settled verities of the Word of God. There is a Visible and there is a Spiritual Church. The two are distinguishable, though related Bodies. The amount of their relation is, however, a variable quantity. At times, they have been almost identical; the distinction being hardly perceptible. Then, again, they have become immensely unlike, and held together by scarcely a remaining bond. Sometimes the Visible Church has been composed of nearly all pure Wheat. At others, under long, mildewing seasons, it has nearly all run to straw and husks, with but here and there a sound and ripe kernel to be found. Thus, when the fires of Pagan persecution kept the Church comparatively pure from dross, the Visible and the Spiritual Church were nearly one and the same. But, in later ages, when the fires were lighted in Christ's name, and turned against the true gold of His own Spiritual Temple; then the Visible Church contained little but an impure, though shining tinsel. It became, in its most obtrusive characteristics, a splendid body of death, sitting on thrones and chairs of state; while the spiritual Church, so far, at least, as it was then on earth, was a hidden body of Life, concealed in caves and among mountains. The one was mainly a gorgeous system of forms and formal persecutors; the other, a little company of faith and faithful sufferers; the two being

held together by some remaining bonds, but scarcely touching each other by the links of a kindred life. In all ages, however, the distinction between the two has existed. This distinction has never disappeared. Nor has there ever been a time, when the name, Church, did not rightfully belong to the Spiritual, as thus distinguished from the Visible Body.

It may be well, before proceeding to show the importance of these views to Christian Theology, and their agreement with our own standards, to spend one moment in explaining the sense, in which the Church, as now presented, has, by some been called, Invisible. This epithet was much used in the seventeenth century; that grand period of theologic conflict between the Protestant Church in England, and her Romish opponents. Whether it were wisely selected may be doubtful. Be this as it may; it meant, not that the Church, in this idea of it, is a mere abstraction, an invisible notion; but, that the faith in Christ and its resulting holiness, which constitute men members of this Church, are invisible; seen by none but God. God only knows, with absolute certainty, who belong to this true Church of Christ. We may judge men, reasonably well, "by their fruits." Still, our judgments on this evidence are fallible. God alone "knoweth who are His" in such a way as not, by possibility, to be deceived. For this reason, the old writers called the whole communion of such, "The Invisible Church." The persons of those, who constitute it, so long as they continue on earth, are visible; but their inward proofs of membership are invisible. Their organization in Christ, as Head, is spiritual, not an object of sense. God alone can point out their persons with infallible certainty. Thus understood, there can be no solid objection to the term; although I have not chosen to adopt it; because, in every respect, save that of the secret of true membership or organization in Christ, this Church is as visible as any other body in the world.

II. The importance to Christian Theology of the view which I have given, demands a fuller notice than can now be taken. I can but glance at three points.

1. We know, then, that Christ and His Apostles insist much

on the union of Christians and the unity of the Church. They speak of the benefits of this unity; of its necessity, as an evidence to the world, of Christ's mission from the Father; and of the evil of violating this unity. And, in His last, all-prevalent prayer, Christ virtually prophecies that this unity shall continue unbroken; and that its glorious testimony to the Truth shall be felt and acknowledged by the world.

The question, then, arises; was this sacred, this divine unity, predicated of the Visible, or of the Spiritual Church? And it is one of the most important questions in Christian Theology. Volumes have been written on it. In answer, however, I have space to say but this; the unity, on which Christ so fervently insists, that blest and heavenly bond, which makes Christians one, even as Christ and the Father are one, this unity resides in the Spiritual Church. It is a reality, and an actuality in this Church and in no other. In this Church it has never been broken. Injured, in some degree, it may have been, through human infirmity; but, broken it has never been. In the main it has been preserved untouched. True disciples of Christ have disputed, and, while unknown to each other, have indulged harsh and unkind feelings. But, it has never needed more than that they should come together and know each other truly, to show them how perfectly, in all essential things, they were one in Christ. This coming together in thorough, mutual knowledge, has ever proved the joining of the two ends of that electric chain of spiritual kindred, which, starting from the heart of Christ, passes round through the heart of every true Christian, and, returning to Christ again, holds the whole in one sacred brotherhood. That touch of mutual knowledge and intercourse has ever been all that was needed to start the current of their sympathetic life, and put it instantly in warm, and glowing, and blissful circulation! O yes! It is true; it is no dream! This mutual and thorough knowledge of each other has ever been, to true Christians, the sweet and silent voice of Christ in their hearts, speaking their brief tempests into a perfect calm and making them realize that the vessel, in which they are embarked, carries Him, who carries Heaven! Under the one divine Headship of Christ,

this spiritual Church holds and will forever hold, unbroken unity; while efforts to force unity on the Visible Church have been productive, mainly, of either hypocrisy or bloodshed.

2. Again, we know that "exceedingly great and precious promises" are made to the followers of Christ. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." "MY sheep hear MY voice, and I know THEM, and they follow ME; and I give unto them Eternal Life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." "No weapon, that is formed against thee, shall prosper; and every tongue, that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn." "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Here, too, the question arises—with the former equally important to Christian Theology — are these and kindred promises made to Christians as a Visible, or as a Spiritual Church? The brief, but unhesitating answer is, they are made to them as a Spiritual Church; as the one whole Communion of Christ's true followers. To this Church alone are they appropriate: to this alone have they been fulfilled. This Church has, evermore, Christ's presence. Against this Church no weapon has ever prospered. In Christ's promises, she is virtually omnipotent. In his faithfulness, her final victory is sure. His promises are her heritage; and his grace, her possession. His blessings clothe her as with garments of salvation. She is "The King's Daughter, all-glorious within;" and her mercies have ever been, and shall forever be, "The sure mercies of David." All this can be said of the Church in no other sense than that, in which she is spiritual, truly a "Communion of saints." To apply these promises to the Visible Church is a source of perilous delusion to the souls of men.

3. Once more; We know that a species of Indefectibility, or Infallibility, has been invested in the Church. "The Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the Truth." She is to be "guided" by the Holy Spirit "into all Truth." And, against her, in her Truth, as well as in her fortunes, "the gates of Hell are never to prevail."

Here, again, the question arises; So far as Infallibility is implied in these expressions, is it an investment in the Visible or in the Spiritual Church? I reply; in the latter, and in no other. This alone has never either fatally or materially erred. By the very terms of its being, in holding to Christ, the Head, it holds every thing essential, and nothing essentially opposed, to His Truth. The Spiritual Church has often bled in defence of the Gospel; but it has never fallen a traitor in that defence. Not so, on the contrary supposition. The Visible Church has often and fundamentally erred. Indeed, the doctrine of an Infallibility, vested in the Church, when understood in this sense, has done little more than stereotype the most destructive errors.

The points, which have now been noticed, have made Christian Theology, for ages, one wide field of conflict, simply because they have been drawn out of their true connexion, and forced into a position, for which they were not designed. The conflict about them will never cease till Christ again has His own; till He is acknowledged as the only centre of unity in His own spiritual Church; till His Promises are regarded as the heritage of this Church alone; and till men cease to seek for Infallibility save in Him and in His own inspired Word.

III. In the course of these remarks, I have occasionally alluded to the fact, that the standards of our Church, and the standard writers of our Protestant Reformation, sustain that view of the Church, which I have now unfolded. This opens a wide field for examination; and I shall not attempt to explore it in its extent. A few citations will be sufficient for the object, which I have in view.

1. In looking, then, at the standards of our own Church, it is evidently proper that, while seeking her idea of the true, Spiritual Church of Christ, our eyes should be directed to her devotional, rather than to her dogmatical, standards; because, in her devotional standards, she bears her part with the whole body of spiritual worshippers; and therefore speaks the language of true universality;—while, in her dogmatical standards, she is legislating for her own government and discipline, as a separate portion of the Visible Church; and

therefore speaks for herself only, without claiming to bind others, in all things, to her judgments. It is in her worship, emphatically, that she appears as the true Catholic.

(1.) Turn, then, in the first place, to the Collect for "All Saints' Day." God is there addressed, as "having knit together His Elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical Body of His Son, Christ, our Lord:" and we pray for "grace so to follow His blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which he has prepared for those, who unfeignedly love Him, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now, this language is strictly evidence in the case before us. Our Church is here teaching, as well as praying. She is uttering her mind on a great and important subject; and in doing so, she gives a distinct and, we may say, perfect definition of the one holy and universal Church. She styles it, "God's elect," not disconnected and unorganized, but "knit together in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical Body of His Son, Christ." This "one communion and fellowship, knit together in the mystical Body of Christ," is a true Church; or there is no such thing as a Church in Heaven, or on earth. Of whom, then, is this Church said to be composed?

In settling this point, observe you, the Collect is a prayer for "All Saints." And who are they? Romish saints alone? No. The saints of Episcopal communions exclusively? No, —but God's saints; His "blessed saints;" His saints in Patriarchal, and Hebrew, and Jewish times; His saints in the days of Christ, of His Apostles, and of all Christian ages; His saints now and always; His saints here and every where; His saints who are alive in the flesh, and who have become, or shall become "spirits of the just made perfect." These, all these, and only these, are the members "elect"—the "knit together in one communion and fellowship in the mystical Body of Christ;" in the one truly united and Holy Church, of which Christ is the divinely constituted Head; and the Collect teaches us to pray for "grace, so to follow these in all virtuous and goodly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which God has prepared for those who unfeignedly love Him."

This last expression is a Biblical exposition of the word, "elect," in the opening of the Collect. The "elect" are those, who "unfeignedly love God." "All things," says St. Paul, "work together for good to them that love God—to them that are the *called* according to His purpose." Here the phrase; "them that love God," and the expression, "the called," or elect, "according to his purpose," are synonymous and mutually explanatory. So, in the prayer before us, the phrase, they who "unfeignedly love God," and the expression, His "elect in one communion and fellowship," are identical in meaning; mutually exegetical. The language at the close of the Collect, therefore, is equally available, with that at the opening and in the middle, for the settlement of the question; who compose this truly united—this one holy Church; this "one communion and fellowship in the mystical Body of Christ?" They are all those "blessed saints," and only those who "unfeignedly love God." Dare any man take this expression, and extend it, with its kindred terms in the Collect, into a description of the visible Church, or of those exclusively, who are really holy members in our own and kindred Episcopal communions? Let him attempt so strange an act, and our Zion herself shall rise up from her knees, from the offering of this, her truly Catholic prayer, and forbid such deep violence on her words. She is not here describing the visible Church; she is rather teaching us who compose the one holy Communion, the really united Church of Christ; and is praying if peradventure those, who now constitute her professed members, may also be found included, at last, in that great, that divine knitting together of all God's "elect."

The language of this Collect, it is needless to say, is based on some of the very passages in the Bible, which I have expounded; and contains a description of the Church perfectly identical with the idea which it has been my purpose to exhibit. Had I explored the whole English language, I could not have found terms more suited to my purpose than those here furnished; the precise, luminous teachings of our Zion, as she deliberately utters her mind at the footstool of the Throne.

(2.) Turn next to the prayer at the close of our Communion

Service. We there thank God "that we," "who have duly received the holy mysteries" of the Lord's Supper, who are really partakers of Christ by faith, "are also very members incorporate in the mystical Body of His Son; which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs, through hope, of His everlasting kingdom by the merits of the most precious death and passion of His dear Son." To this thanksgiving we add a petition for "grace to continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as God hath prepared for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

This passage expresses precisely the same idea with the former, and to it the same remarks may be applied. Our Church is here uttering her most solemn teachings as well as her most solemn prayers; and, in doing so, she gives a concise, but still luminous definition of the one whole and true Church of Christ. She styles it "the mystical Body of the Son" of God; and then, varying her language, she calls it "that holy fellowship." In this, too, as in the former instance, the Body described is, unquestionably, a Church. The phrase, "mystical Body of thy Son," has precisely the same meaning with that in which St. Paul says, that God gave Christ "to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body." The term "Body," as a metaphor for the Church, has an established meaning.

Of whom, then, according to the teaching of this prayer, is the Church composed? I answer by a simple repetition of the words; "the mystical Body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people." This latter clause is a comment, in the very form of a definition, upon the former. The Church here described is expressly declared to consist of "the blessed company of all faithful people." The style of this language belongs to the age in which our Prayer Book was put forth. The phrase, "all faithful people," meant then just what we now understand by all true believers. A similar antiquity of style occurs earlier in the prayer; where those, who are really partakers of Christ by faith, are said to be "very members, incorporate in his mystical Body." The meaning is, "true members," true, as opposed to false, or

merely formal; members, not only by "the outward and visible sign," but also by "the inward and spiritual" signification; members of the Body of Christ by the Spirit's ingrafting. The Church described in this prayer, then, is composed of "all true believers," and only such. It is not the distracted, but "the blessed company" of all the "very members of Christ's mystical Body." Now, then, who constitute this "Blessed Company," this "Holy Fellowship?" Remember; our Church, when she uses this language, has gone down upon her knees, before the visible symbols of the bloody passion of Him, who came into our world to "taste death for every man." She has gone down upon her knees before the consecrated memorials of Gethsemane's bloody sweat and of Calvary's bloodier cross; and she has gone down there to thank God for a Savior to penitent and believing sinners! Remember this; and then tell me, has she gone down to that soul-humbling posture, and placed herself amidst those heart-melting associations, to bless God for salvation through the Episcopacy alone, or to define the visible Church, as limited to those, who enjoy even such rich blessings as an Episcopal ministry and sacraments? To suppose this, were to place her under heavy degradation; and she would again rise up from her knees before the sacrament of her crucified Lord, and nobly cast the reproach away from her. She would say: "I took that lowly posture, and surrounded myself with those touching remembrancers, the better to realize my share in the mercies of Him, who "died, the just for the unjust, that He might bring them to God;" the better to realize my fellowship with patriarchs and prophets, with apostles and martyrs, and with all the noble company of saints in every age, from the morning to the eve of time; the better to realize my own privileges in having contributed many from among my own children to that "blessed company of all faithful people;" the better to realize a fitting sympathy with my once suffering but now rejoicing Lord in every "broken spirit," and in every "contrite heart," that comes to Him from this poor, dying world, for pardon, peace and life; the better to mingle my tuneful song with that of the redeemed of all lands and of every name, "that holy fellowship" of the saved,

whom Jesus is gathering out of time, and preparing to glorify in eternity. It was for this that I knelt there, as if at the foot of the cross, as if amid the sprinkling of the blood of "the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world." I was seeking to identify myself with the great "mystical Body of Christ," my living Head; that Body in which there are no dead members; the one part of which is already joined with Him in heaven, while the other yet walketh with his purifying Spirit upon earth.

Such is the posture, and such the teaching of our Church in this most Catholic, this most teaching prayer; and thus does she define the one, unbroken and holy Church of her divine Head. I delight to see her in such an attitude, and to hear her utter such a teaching. I delight to see her thus lowly, thus thrilled with her divine theme, thus covering herself, not with the apostolic robes of her most venerable Episcopacy, but with that one and ampler robe of salvation through the Crucified, which is thrown over the whole of His one "mystical Body;" which adorns "the Bride, the Lamb's wife;" which clothes the sacred family living with Him in holy union and concord, from the first saint that believed, to the last believer that shall be saved.

Such language as that, which has now been examined, from two of the most expressive forms of the Church, cannot be considered as describing either the Visible Church, or the Church as limited by the Episcopacy; because the Visible Church contains a vast multitude of unconverted, and even of most ungodly members; while the Church, as limited by the Episcopacy, does not contain all the true saints, all the really holy, whom Christ has gathered out of mankind and into Himself. It is language, fitted for nothing else in the world but a faithful and exact description of that Spiritual Church, which consists of none but true believers, and which comprises all the true believers, who ever have lived, or ever shall live.

3. I have already said, that the language of the Creed, where we profess to believe in "The holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints," is, by excellent divines, regarded as describing the Church, under the very idea of it, which I

have presented. The same idea evidently occurs both in the Litany, and in the Te Deum; both which, like the Creed, are among the most ancient and accredited of Christian compositions. They breathe the true spirit of early devotion; and savor strongly of an age, when Christian fellowship, in its generous grasp, embraced all who truly "held the Head," Christ. Thus, in the Litany, we pray God "to rule and govern His holy Church universal in the right way;" and "to give to all His people increase of grace to hear meekly His Word, to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit." Thus, too, in the Te Deum, we hear of "the goodly fellowship of the Prophets;" "The glorious company of the Apostles;" "the noble army of Martyrs;" and finally, (as inclusive of the whole blessed fellowship of the saints) "The holy Church throughout all the world," in all its revolving ages. "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers." "We therefore pray Thee, help thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with thy precious blood." "Make them to be numbered with thy Saints in glory everlasting." "O Lord, save thy people, and bless thine heritage." Here is language fitting the mouths of those who worship Christ. Here is a copious multiplication of terms, for the expression of one single idea; "all true believers;" "Thy servants;" "Thy saints;" "Thy people;" "Thine heritage;" terms which refuse any limit on their meaning, short of that, which bounds the fruit of Christ's bloodily redeeming sufferings and death; and all ranged under the one broadly comprehending phrase; "The holy Church throughout all the world."

Much time might be spent in amplifying these glowingly concentrated expressions, in tracing them up to their origin in the Bible, and in illustrating their Christ-like catholicism of comprehension. But, I have not space to pursue the pleasing theme. I can merely recall the thought, that, thus far, I have been citing from the devotional standards of our Church.—You have been catching the utterances of her mind, while bowing in worship amidst the hosts of the redeemed at the feet of the Redeemer; and while erect in praises, amidst the

whole band of those, who shout, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain" and "hath redeemed us to God by His blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hath made us unto God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." You have been listening to Her, therefore, in acts, which lift her above all but the loftiest and broadest conceptions, and which place her right by the side of Christ, as He looks, with divine satisfaction over the whole fruit of His sufferings, over the whole "travail of His soul." In her worship, she is not controversial, but Christian; on her knees, she defines Christ's Church as it lives in Christ's heart, and not as it is ranged within visible lines.

The testimony of the standard writers of our Protestant Reformation must be reserved for my next Discourse.

DISCOURSE V.

"HEAD over all things to the Church: which is His Body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."—EPHESIANS i; 22, 23.

THE question, whether this passage refers to the Church, as a body under visible organization, with officers and form of government; or to the Church, as a body, whose organization is spiritual only, consisting in the inward union of the members with their Head by faith, has already been considered. It will not, therefore, be necessary to enter into the inquiry at the present time. I will merely remark, that we have seen reason to regard the Church, here described, as identical with what our Communion service denominates, that "Mystical Body of Christ, which is the blessed company of ALL faithful people;" of all, who truly believe in Christ. This idea of the Church we found, in our last discourse, imbodied in several parts of our devotional standards; those venerable forms of worship, in which our Church utters her mind, at the foot of the Throne, not as a controvertist, but as a portion of that great band of worshippers, who present their offerings of prayer and praise to one common Father, by faith in the one Savior of them ALL. What I have proposed for the present discourse, is, to make a few citations from the standard writers of our own Protestant Reformation, for the purpose of showing, that, theologically, as well as devotionally, the idea of the Church, which I have presented, has the highest of human sanction.

These standard writers of our Church flourished chiefly in two great ages; that of the Reformation itself, and that of the

seventeenth Century. The former, in the sixteenth, was an age of much controversy, but of more action. Principles were then asserted and defended; but the main labor of the period lay in building up the Reformed Church on the basis of those principles; and, with blood, cementing it in the true faith of Christ. The latter, in the seventeenth Century, may be distinguished as an age of much action, but of more controversy. The "good fight of faith," with all its blood and fires, was ended; and the race of those gigantically great men of the English Reformation, subsequently raised up, came forth upon a comparatively quiet field, to demonstrate, from the Word of God, the truth of those principles, which the preceding age had laid in the foundation of the Reformed Church.

Upon the main points, which, in these discourses, I have endeavored to establish, the distinction between the Spiritual and the Visible Church, and the superior title of the former to the name of THE CHURCH, the writers of both those ages were distinct and full.

1. In his catechism, the great martyr, Archbishop Cranmer, whose blood watered the Church of the English Reformation, in explaining "the Apostle's Creed," speaks thus: "I believe the holy Catholic Church, that is to say, that there is ever found some company of men, or some congregation of good people, which believe the gospel and are saved.* * * For, this word, Church, signifieth a company of men, lightened with the Spirit of Christ, which do receive the Gospel.* * And this Christian Church is a Communion of saints; that is to say—all that be of this communion, or company, be holy, and be one holy Body under Christ their Head. And this congregation receiveth, of their Head and Lord, all spiritual riches and gifts, that pertain to the sanctification and making holy of the same Body. And these ghostly treasures," or spiritual gifts, "be common to the whole Body and to every member of the same."*

Again: "The holy Church is so unknown to the world that no man can describe it; but God alone, who searcheth the hearts of all men, and knoweth his true children from others."

* Catechism of 1548.

"This Church is "the pillar of the truth," because it resteth on God's Word;"—"but, as for the open, known Church, and the outward face thereof, it is not the pillar of the truth, otherwise than it is, as it were, a register, or a treasury to keep the books of God's holy will and testament, and to rest only thereupon."*

In these passages, bear in mind, the martyr is interpreting the language of the Apostles' Creed, the highest, most authoritative standard of our Church. How, then, does he define "the holy Catholic Church, the Communion of saints," which we there profess to believe? Precisely as I have defined the one true Church of Christ, as the company of those who "are saved;" that Body of which Christ is Head; and "every member" of which is a partaker of those "ghostly treasures," which are the gifts of the Spirit. This Church he carefully distinguishes from the visible, or, as he calls it, "the open, known Church;" declaring the former to be, and the latter not to be, "the pillar of the truth." This, then, the great company of the saved, of those who believe in Christ, and are made holy, is the Church, which Cranmer finds in the Apostles' Creed, one of the most ancient of all Christian symbols.

2. His brother martyr, the accomplished Bishop Ridley, of London, is in full concord with him on this point.

"The name, Church," says he, "is taken in Scripture, sometimes, for the whole multitude of them, which profess the name of Christ; of the which they are also named Christians. But, as St. Paul saith of the Jew—"He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither yet, all that be of Israel are counted of the seed;" even so, not every one which is a Christian outwardly, is a Christian indeed. For, "If any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of His." Therefore, that Church, which is His Body, of whom Christ is the Head, standeth only of living stones, and true Christians, not only outwardly in name and title, but inwardly in heart and in truth."†

* Answer to Dr. Smith. † Ridley's Works.

Here is the same distinction, as in the former case, between the outward and the inward, between the visible and the spiritual Church; while the latter is expressly said to be "that Church, which is His Body, of which Christ is Head, and which standeth only of living stones, and true Christians;" or hath nothing in it but members, who are joined to Christ by a vitalizing and saving faith.

More to the same effect might be cited; but I must pass from this first, to what may be termed the second age of the Reformation.

3. Among the earliest of the writers of this prolific period, stands Richard Hooker, a name in every Churchman's mouth; as humble and holy as he was learned and wise.

Writing in his great work, the Ecclesiastical Polity, with the express purpose of distinguishing the invisible from the visible Church, he says: "The Church of Christ, which we properly term His Body mystical, can be but one, neither can that one be sensibly discerned by any man, inasmuch as the parts thereof are some in heaven already with Christ; and the rest that are on earth, albeit their natural persons be visible, we do not discern under this property, whereby they are truly and infallibly of that body. Only our minds, by intellectual conceit, are able to apprehend that such a real body there is; a body collective, because it containeth a huge multitude; a body mystical, because the mystery of their conjunction is removed altogether from sense." And now, mark what he says of this true "Church of Christ." "Whatsoever we read in Scripture, concerning the endless love, and saving mercy, which God sheweth towards his Church, the only proper subject thereof is this Church;" that is—this "Body mystical," "part whereof is already in heaven with Christ," while the other part is still "on earth," being "truly and infallibly of that Body," though "the mystery of their conjunction" with Christ "is removed altogether from sense." "Concerning this flock it is" adds he, "that our Lord and Savior hath promised, 'I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands.'"

To this "mystical Church" he says, "belong the everlasting

promises of love, mercy and blessedness." "Unto that Church, which is His mystical Body," it is "not possible" that wicked, or merely formal members "should belong;" "because that Body consisteth of none but only true Israelites, true sons of Abraham, true servants and saints of God."*

Again, in his first sermon on the Epistle of Jude, he says:— "The multitude of them, which truly believe, howsoever they be dispersed far and wide, each from other, is all one Body, whereof the Head is Christ; one building, whereof He is Corner Stone; in whom they, as the members of the Body, being knit, and, as the stones of the building, being coupled, grow up to a man of perfect stature, and rise to an holy temple in the Lord. That which linketh Christ to us, is, His mere love and mercy towards us. That which tieth us to Him, is, our faith in the promised salvation revealed in the Word of truth. That, which uniteth and joineth us among ourselves, in such sort that we are now as if we had but one heart and one soul, is, our love."†

To these and the like beautiful conceptions, and just delineations of the true mystical Church of Christ, in which Hooker abounds, I add nothing, except to say, that every word falls in, in perfect accord, with the view, which I have already so largely illustrated from the Bible and from our devotional standards. Hooker, one of the greatest Biblical divines of England, unquestionably taught this view of the one, true, holy and Catholic Church of Christ.

4. Perkins, also, another of that great army of our reformed divines, speaks thus: "This union to Christ, maketh the Church to be the Church; and by it, the members thereof, whether they be in heaven, or in earth, are distinguished from all other companies whatsoever."‡

He calls "the Catholic Church militant," "The number of believers dispersed through the world, who are effectually called, and sanctified and preserved unto life everlasting." Speaking of "two sorts of men, professing religion," one of

* Ecclesiastical Polity, Book iii., § 1. p. 269—272. London 1825.
† First Sermon on St. Jude, § 11.
‡ Perkins' Works, vol. i., p. 277.

whom "do unfeignedly believe and are sanctified," while the other only "make show of faith, but believe not;" he says:— "Of the former doth the Catholic Church consist, and not of the latter;" these "are no members set into the Head of this Body, though they may seem to be." "This Catholic Church is invisible, and cannot, by the eye of sense, be discerned." It "cannot utterly perish and be dissolved. All other congregations and particular Churches, being mixed, may fail; yet this cannot be overcome." "To this assembly, and no other, belong all the promises of this life and the life to come. It is the ground and pillar of truth; that is, the doctrine of true religion is always safely kept and maintained in it."*

5. While these passages clearly develop the idea of the Church, as I have presented it, and shew that, to this Church alone the promises are made, and in it alone the true indefectibility is found; the following, from Bishop Hall, shews that in the same Church resides the divine unity, on which Christ so earnestly insists. "If," says he, in his sermon on the Beauty and Unity of the Church, "from particular visible Churches, you shall turn your eyes to the true, inward, universal company of God's elect and secret ones, there shall you see more perfectly the one Dove; for, what the other is in profession, this is in truth; that one baptism is here the true laver of regeneration; that one faith is a saving reposal upon Christ; that one Lord is 'the Savior of His Body.' No natural body is more one than this mystical; one Head rules it; one Spirit animates it; one set of joints moves it; one food nourishes it; one robe covers it. So it is one in itself, so one with Christ, as Christ is one with the Father."†

"The whole Church," says he, "is the spiritual Temple of God. Every believer is a living stone laid in those sacred walls. There is no place for any loose stone in God's edifice; the whole Church is one entire Body."‡

6. Bishop Taylor, also, that perhaps richest of Christian orators, is full of the doctrine which I have unfolded. In his,

* Perkins' Works, vol. iii., pp. 482, 504.
† Sermon on Beauty and Unity of the Church.
‡ Treatise of Christ Mystical, chapter viii., § 2.

Dissuasive from Popery, he thus writes: "They, who are indeed holy and obedient to Christ's laws of faith and manners, these are truly and perfectly the Church;" "the Church of God in the eyes and heart of God. For the Church of God are the Body of Christ; but the mere profession of Christianity makes no man a member of Christ; nothing but a new creature, nothing but a 'faith working by love;' and keeping the commandments of God." "Hypocrites are not Christ's servants, and therefore not Christ's members, and therefore no part of the Church of God; but improperly and equivocally, as a dead man is a man; all which is perfectly summed up in these words of St. Augustine, saying that "The Body of Christ is not (*bipartitum*, it is not) a double Body, all that are Christ's Body shall reign with Christ forever." "If by a Church we mean that society, which is really joined to Christ; which hath received the Holy Ghost; which is heir of the promises and of the good things of God; which is the Body of which Christ is the Head; then the invisible part of the visible Church—that is, the true servants of Christ are the Church; that is, to them only appertain the Spirit and the truth, the promises and the graces, the privileges and advantages of the Gospel." "The faithful only and obedient are beloved of God. Others may believe rightly," (in speculation,) "but so do the devils, who are no parts of the Church;" "and it will be a strange proposition, which affirms any one to be of the Church, for no other reason but such as qualifies the Devil to be so." "Those who are condemned by Christ," (continues St. Augustine,) "for their evil and polluted consciences, are not in Christ's Body, which is the Church, for Christ hath no damned members." "Although when we speak of all the acts and duties, of the judgments and nomenclatures, of outward appearances and accounts of law, we call the mixed society by the name of the Church; yet, when we consider it in the true, proper, and primary meaning, all the promises of God, the Spirit of God, the life of God, and all the good things of God are peculiar to the Church of God in God's sense, in the way in which he owns it; that is, as it is holy, united unto Christ, like to Him, and partaker of the divine nature. The other are but a heap of men keeping good

company, and calling themselves by a good name, managing the external parts of union and ministry; but, because they otherwise belong not to God, the promises no otherwise belong to them, but as they may, and when they do, return to God. Here, then are two senses of the word, Church; God's sense, and man's sense; the sense of religion, and the sense of government; common rites, and spiritual union."*

Much more to the same effect, might be cited from this exuberant author; but I hasten to draw a little from other stores.

7. Archbishop Usher, one of the greatest lights of his age, in his Body of divinity, puts this question: "What is meant" (in the Creed) "by the Catholic Church?" and then answers; "That whole, universal company of the elect, that ever were, are, or shall be, gathered together in one body, knit together in one faith, under one Head, Jesus Christ. For God, in all places, and of all sorts of men, had from the beginning, hath now, and ever will have, an holy Church, which is therefore called "the Catholic Church;" that is, God's whole, or universal assembly, because it comprehendeth the multitude of all those that have, do, or shall believe unto the world's end."

Again, in the same work, he asks; "Who are the true members of the Church militant on earth?" and answers; "Those alone, who, as living members of the mystical Body, are, by the Spirit and faith, secretly and inseparably conjoined unto Christ, their Head; in which respect, the true militant Church is both invincible and invisible."†

"The Communion of Saints," he says, in his Sermon before the House of Commons, "consists in the union, which we all have with one Head. For Christ, our Head, is the main foundation of this heavenly union."‡

It is needless to point out the exact coincidence of all this with what has been advanced in my previous discourses. Usher belongs to that grand Protestant host, who make the true Church to consist of every true believer, who is gathered into Christ and saved, from the beginning to the End of Time.

* Dissuasive from Popery, Part ii., B. I., Sect. i., §§ i. and ii.
† Bod. Div. 187, 189.
‡ Sermon before the House of Commons.

8. Jackson also, eminent among the eminent, must be cited as belonging to the same ranks. Speaking in his celebrated Treatise of the Church, "which is truly holy and Catholic," He says: "This Church is a true and real body, consisting of many parts, all really, though mystically and spiritually united unto one Head; and, by their real union with one Head, are all truly and really united amongst themselves." "That this Church is a true Body, the Apostle"—hath left registered; "I rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the affliction of Christ in my flesh, for His Body's sake, which is the Church." "Every one, then, is so far, a member of Christ's Church as he is a member of Christ's Body. He that is not, in some sort, a member of Christ's Body, can be, in no sort, a member of His Church. He that is a true, live member of the One, is a true live member of the other. He that is but an equivocal, analogical, hypocritical, or painted member of the one, is but an equivocal, analogical, hypocritical, or painted member of the other."*

Arguing in the same work, from a passage in Ephesians which I have already explained, he writes; "Every member of the Church or of Christ's Body is more near, or dear unto Him than our flesh is unto us; and more His own than our flesh is ours."†

Again, uttering himself in a strict definition, he says: "The Catholic Chnrch, in the prime sense, consists only of such as are actual and indissoluble members of Christ's mystical Body; or, of such as have the Catholic faith not only sown in their brains, or understanding, but thoroughly rooted in their hearts."‡

9. With this definition perfectly agrees that of the great Dr. Barrow, the champion of the Church of England against the Papal Supremacy. In his discourse on the Unity of the Church, he says; the Invisible Church is "The whole body of God's people, that is, ever hath been, or ever shall be, from the beginning of the world to the consummation thereof, who,

* Treatise on the Holy Catholic Faith and Church, pp. 18, 19. Phil. 1844.
† Treatise, etc., p. 21.
‡ Treatise, etc., p. 152.

having believed in Christ, and sincerely obeyed God's laws, shall finally, by the meritorious performances and sufferings of Christ, be saved."*

"To this Invisible Church, composed only of such as shall finally be saved, belong," he says, "all the glorious titles and excellent privileges attributed to the Church in holy Scripture. This is 'the Body of Christ;' 'the Spouse of Christ;' 'the House of God built on a Rock, against which the gates of Hell shall not prevail;' 'the elect generation.'" "This is that one Body, into which we are all baptized by one Spirit; the members whereof do hold a mutual sympathy and complacence; which is joined to one Head, deriving sense and motion from it; which is enlivened and moved by one Spirit." "To this Church belongs peculiarly that unity, which is so often attributed to the Church." "This is the Society, for whom Christ did pray that they all might be one."†

"All Christians are united by spiritual cognation and alliance, as being all regenerated by the same incorruptible seed; being alike born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; whence, as the Sons of God and brethren of Christ, they become brethren one to another." "The whole Christian Church is one by its incorporation into the mystical Body of Christ, or as fellow-subjects of that spiritual, heavenly kingdom, whereof Christ is the sovereign Head and Governor; whence they are governed by the same laws, obliged by the same institutions and functions, partake of the same privileges, are entitled to the same promises, and encouraged by the same rewards. So they make but one spiritual Corporation, or Republic, whereof Christ is the Sovereign Lord."‡

10. And finally, without further addition to this catalogue of witnesses; "the Incomparable pen" of Bishop Sanderson gives this, as the first and most important of four senses, in which the word, Church, is used: "The whole company of God's elect, actually made members of Christ by virtue of an

* Discourse on Unity of the Church.
† Oxford edition of his Works, vol. vi., pp. 497—499.
‡ Ibid. p. 597.

inward effectual calling to faith and godliness. This we commonly call the Invisible Church, or the Church of God's elect."*

You have now looked at a few of the many citations, which might be made from that noble host of great Christians and great divines, who adorned the two principal periods of our English Protestant Reformation. I have not thought best to interrupt the chain by prolonged comments of my own; I leave them simply as they stand, to tell their own story, and to give in their own witness. They touch, sustainingly, every point, which I have made in my argument; and, in such a way as to show that the ages, to which they belong, were exceedingly familiar with the views, which they exhibit; and that they were considered as presenting cardinal points in the pure Protestant faith, which was then established and defended as well with the blood of saints, as with the pen of knowledge. The seventeenth Century, doubtless, witnessed the maintenance of opposite opinions in England; but, they were mostly the opinions of what have been termed the "Non-jurors;" a name given to those who were adherents of the deposed, because Romanizing James II., and who could not honestly take the oath of allegiance to his Protestant successors, William and Mary; opinions, therefore, suspected in their very source, and weighing nothing, with true Protestant minds, against those of Cranmer and Ridley, of Hooker and Perkins, of Hall and Taylor, of Usher and Jackson, of Barrow and Sanderson; to say nothing of the multitude of others, true and loyal children of the Reformation, who marched by their side, or followed in their train.

Let me not, however, be misunderstood in the citations which I have made. It is, indeed, pleasant to find oneself in company which he likes. But, the true Christian teacher, provided he be sure of having Christ and His Word on his side, might well be content to march alone, with innumerable hosts of combatants arrayed against him. I have made the foregoing citations, not because they are the infallible authorities, on which the argument for the true Church is founded, but, be-

* Discourse concerning the visibility of the true Church. Hooker's Collection, p. 213. Phil. 1844.

cause they are trusty and credible witnesses to show that this argument is no novelty; that I have not been broaching new and rash speculations of my own; but that I have been moving in the track of some of the soundest and holiest minds of one of the soundest and purest Churches of Christendom. There are those, who make Tradition a sort of infallible authority in matters of faith and doctrine; and who hold this authority to be a necessary interpreter of the Word of the living God. They set up this Tradition as an infallible Judge on the theological bench, and bow to its oracular decisions with an implicit faith. But, such is not the rank, which we have been taught to assign this speaker. We place it, not as Judge on the bench, but as evidence on the witnesses' stand; and we receive its statements only so far as they are harmonious with the only infallible rule of faith and doctrine—the everlasting Word of Truth.

Look back, then, and question carefully the witnesses whom I have called. Do they speak according to this Word? If so, give them your credence, not because they can add any thing of certainty to that Word, but because they are the unimpeached sons of that Church to which, as Episcopalians, we belong, and because they speak according "to the Law and the Testimony" which the Holy Spirit hath penned, and which secure to us the priceless heritage of the one true Savior "of all faithful people"—of all holy believers.

PART II.

THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

DISCOURSE VI.

"As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk; and so ordain I in all the Churches."—I Cor. vii; 17.

The Church, as it is, in the truest and highest sense, one, Catholic, or Universal, has already occupied us through a series of discourses. On the authority of the Bible, and on the testimony of our own Standards, and of the standard writers of our own Protestant Reformation, we have seen it, in this sense, composed of "all faithful people;" of all true believers; of all, who, by a living faith, "hold the Head" of the Body, which is Christ; and who, by the Holy Ghost, are, in that faith, sanctified and saved. This is "The Church of the First-born, which are written in heaven" even while sojourning on earth; and which, in the present life, do "come to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel." To this Church, made up of saints alive, and of the spirits of the just made perfect; whose Mediator and High Priest is Christ, and whose cleansing is in the precious blood of sprinkling; all true believers "come" the moment they *are* true believers; they wait not longer for membership in it, but enter *then* into its holy oneness, its great communion, its divine Catholicism. This is the Church, in what I have termed the true, spiritual sense; or, what old writers call "The Invisible Church," because the bond of membership, which unites the believer to Christ, is invisible.

But, I have already said; there is a sense, in which Christ's

Church is Visible. I now add; there is a sense, in which this Visible Church is Catholic, or Universal; and the question, upon which I propose to enter, is this; what is this visibly Catholic, or Universal Church? Or whom does it comprehend? The true Comprehension of this Visible Church is the theme now before us.

I am not unaware, either of the difficulties, by which this part of the subject is beset, or of the strong repugnance, which, in certain quarters, is felt to some of the views now to be presented. Still, as I consider them to rest on the authority of the Bible, and to be supported by the testimony of our own Standards, and standard writers, I shall present them with a consciousness of fidelity to the vows, which are on me; and shall hope, ere I close, to satisfy all, who will read with candor and with patience, if not of the demonstrable truth of my positions, at least of their credible claim to the character of sound, Protestant Episcopacy.

I begin, then, by distinctly acknowledging, that the view, which we take of what is essential to the existence of the Church in its spiritual Catholicism, necessarily governs the view, which we take of what is comprehended in the Church, in its visible Catholicism. In other words, the view which we take of the one, true, Spiritual Church of Christ, naturally determines the view, which we are to take of the Church, as a visible, organized Body.

All true Christians hold, as most vital, that there are such realities as the gift of the Spirit, union with Christ, and the pardon of sin. These realities make up the infinitely rich legacy of God to man. Without them, there can be neither Church, nor Christianity. The difference among Christians lies, not in admitting, or denying these divine verities, but, in settling the question, how they are to be realized, or received, by the disciples of Christ. To recur, then, to the second and third definitions of the Church, which I gave in opening this whole subject; if, on the one hand, we hold that an Episcopally constituted ministry is essential to the very being of the Church; indispensably necessary, as "a ministerial intervention" between God and man, for the communication, or

conveyance, of the gift of the Spirit, union with Christ, and the pardon of sin; then, it will necessarily follow, that the Church, as visibly Catholic, can comprehend none but those who are in subjection to an Episcopal ministry; because through this ministry alone the gifts requisite to salvation are received. Then the Visible Church and the Episcopally organized Body are necessarily identical; mutually bounding each other, and excluding all besides. But if, on the other hand, we hold, that the gift of the Spirit, union with Christ, and the pardon of sin, are direct bestowments from God upon the individual soul, received by faith, without any other necessary intervention than that of divinely inspired Truth; then it will unavoidably follow, that the Church, as visibly Catholic, comprehends all those Christian organizations throughout the world, and under whatever form of ministry, in which Christ is truly confessed, his Gospel truly held, and his Sacraments, really administered; and within which God vouchsafes the gift of His Spirit, union with Christ, and the pardon of sin. All such Christian organizations will belong to the Visible Catholic Church, not because all their members are partakers of these unspeakable benefits, but because, among them, the partakers of these benefits are imbodied in outward, visible form. The real partakers of these benefits, as we have seen, constitute, alone, the one true Spiritual Church, by virtue of their union with Christ, through the Spirit. The Church, in that sense, is nothing else than the whole Body of members thus spiritually united with their Divine Head. Wherever, then, these members are imbodied in an outward, visible organization, with a true confession of Christ, a true profession of His Gospel, and a common union in His Sacraments, there, according to this view, will be a portion of the Visible Catholic Church; the main difference between the true Spiritual Church and the Church visible or organized, consisting in this; that the former is the Church as God seeth it; while the latter is the Church as man sees it. The organization itself of the Visible Church is certainly a divine provision, or arrangement; but, from its very nature, and the condition of man, the application of that provision to human society

results in this difference between the Spiritual and the Visible Church; that the former hath none but true and living members; while the latter hath many false and dead members.

Which, then, of the two views, thus re-introduced, are we to adopt? To which do the Bible and our own Church lend their testimony? I can only answer for one, as a student of the Bible and of the teachings of our Church, that they seem to me to lead decidedly to the adoption of the latter view.

1. As bearing on this point, I cannot think it insignificant, that, when the Bible speaks of the true, universal, and holy Church of Christ, it speaks of it as one, without reference to times, places, or outward peculiarities; and in the most universal and unqualified terms, as all holy and all in Christ; but, that, when it speaks of the Church as a visible organization, it often speaks of it as many, as bounded by times and places, and as subject to all the diversities, mutations, and imperfections, which grow out of man's mixed and sinful state.

The texts, which I have examined in the former part of this series, will illustrate what I mean by the former part of this remark. In those passages, the Bible speaks of the Church as the "One fold under the One Shepherd;" "the whole family, which is named in heaven and earth;" "The Bride, the Lamb's wife;" the "One Body" of Christ; the "Holy Temple in the Lord," into which all, who are builded upon Christ by faith, do "grow." This is what Christ calls, "My Church," which He buildeth on Himself: "The Church," to which "the Lord daily added the saved;" "the Church, which is His Body; the fullness of Him that filleth all in all;" "The Church in Christ Jesus," in which God is to be glorified "throughout all ages;" "The Church" which Christ "loved," and for which He "gave Himself;" "The Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the Truth;" "The Church," whose members are all Christ's "brethren;" and "the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven." All this language, it will be remembered, is not only thus absolute, and perfectly unrestricted to time, place, and outward peculiarity, but constantly intermingled with the ascription, to all the members of the Church in this

sense, of life, and growth, and holiness, and the certain inheritance of eternal glory.

What I mean by the latter part of the remark, which I am now illustrating, will appear from such passages as that prefixed to the present discourse: "So ordain I in all the Churches." Let us collect a few of the passages, in which the Church, as visible and organized, is evidently intended.

"Then had the Churches rest throughout all Judea." "If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the Churches of God." "Let your women keep silence in the Churches." "As I have given order to the Churches of Galatia." "The Churches of Asia salute you." "Chosen of the Churches to travel with us." "Messengers of the Churches." "That, which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the Churches." "John, to the Seven Churches in Asia." "There was a great persecution against the Church, which was at Jerusalem." "When they had ordained them elders in every Church." "The Church at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you." "I wrote unto the Church; but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not." "The Church that was at Antioch." "If, then, ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the Church. I speak to your shame." "Cause that this Epistle be read in the Church of the Laodiceans." "In eating, every one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or, despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not?" "Unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write:—I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." And, "unto the Church of the Laodiceans, write;—I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth."*

* Acts ix; 31.—I Cor. xi; 16.—xiv; 34.—xvi; i.—xvi; 19.—II Cor. viii; 19, 23. xi; 28.—Rev. i; 4.—Acts viii; 1.—xiv; 23.—I Pet. v; 13.—III John 9.—Acts xiii; 1.—I Cor. vi; 4, 5.—Col. iv; 16.—I Cor. xi; 21, 22.—Rev. iii; 1.—iii; 14-16.

In reading these, and a multitude of similar passages, we find ourselves in a very different atmosphere from that which surrounded us while reading those before quoted. Here all that is absolute, universal, and general in the language is dropped; and every thing becomes conditioned, limited, and particular. Here, we are no longer in the Church as it exists in Christ,—all calm, and peaceful, and holy, and full of foretastes, and of the likeness of Heaven; we are clearly in the Church as it comes out into mixture and conflict among men; an impure and imperfect, an unresting and disordered, a changing and suffering Body. Here, we find the Church not only as one, but also as many; a Church at rest, and in persecution; bounded by times and places; modified by "custom" and "order;" choosing and sending "messengers;" writing and reading, delivering and receiving Epistles; "ordaining Elders," and dispensing sacraments; doing all things as mixed human bodies are wont to do; and, withal, affected by the doing of them too much as such bodies usually are affected; having judgments, or law proceedings, about the things of this life; troubled with ambitions and contentions; abusing the most sacred of rites to purposes of gluttony and drunkenness; having sometimes a name to live while really dead; frequently engaged in things beautiful and commendable, and not always clear of those, for which they were to be shamed, and on account of which Christ put them loathingly away from Himself!

Now, though all this does not shew us what the Church as visibly Catholic, comprehends, yet it does shew us how very different a thing it is from the Church as one, and spiritual, and holy; as a "Communion of Saints." And it gives us a kind of starting-point in our inquiries; and shews us, in not a few respects, what we are to look for in the Church as visibly Catholic, or Universal; that we may expect to find it existing, in many places and under separate, independent organizations; divided and corrupted; exposed, in parts, to extinguishment, and even liable to be utterly rejected of God.

2. Perhaps we may get along, a little further, in our inquiries by looking at a somewhat different class of passages:—

those, which speak of the Church as a "kingdom." I cannot refer to all these passages; for they are very numerous; I will, therefore, select two, most to my purpose.

In one place, Christ compares "the Kingdom of Heaven" to "a Net cast into the sea, and gathering of every kind; which, when full, they drew to the shore; saving the good in vessels, but casting the bad away."* The Net, here, is evidently the visible Church Catholic, with its organization under ministry, and worship, and sacraments. The sea, into which the Net is cast, is, this whole world, bounded by the shores of time. The "every kind," gathered by the Net, are the countless multitude of souls, of all names, characters, and conditions, the precious and vile, which the Visible Church Catholic gathers within its wide-sweeping organizations. And "the shore," to which the Net is drawn for the grand separating process, is the limit, at which time borders this world by eternity, and casts up its millions into the judgment; drawing the true, Spiritual Church at length, out of the Visible, shewing their everlasting difference, and making the former perfect in glory.

In another place, Christ compares this same "Kingdom of Heaven to a man that sowed good seed in his field:" adding; "But, while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way." The wheat and the tares sprang up and grew confusedly together, until the harvest: but then, the reapers gathered the tares into bundles for the burning; but the wheat, into the master's barn.†

This parable is remarkable for exhibiting the true Spiritual Church, and the Church visible, both in their separateness and in their commixture. "The good seed are the children of the kingdom," and they alone. None others belong to the true Church. "The tares are children of the Wicked One," and constitute no part of that Church. And yet, they are sown and growing in the kingdom, in the Church visible. The Spiritual and the Visible Church are therefore separate and yet commingled. They co-exist; yet are not the same. The

* Matt. xiii; 47, 48. † Matt. xiii; 24—43.

other parts of the parable are explained to our hand. "The Field is the world," this whole earth, as the harvest ground, from which the Visible Church is to gather its vast and mingled multitudes of unspeakably different characters and names.—"The Harvest is the end of the world;" the great day of judgment and of separation. "The Reapers are the Angels;" and the severance, which they work, is the result of the judgment in the perdition of the wicked, and in the "shining forth of the righteous, as the Sun, in the Kingdom of their Father."

Now, both these parabolic views of the Visible Church Catholic shew that the Church, in this sense, comprehends all, of every name and character, whom the outward angencies of the true Gospel gather out of the great sea of time, and the wide field of the world. The Church, in this sense, is a most mixed, as well as most multitudinous Body; and the parables evidently require us to comprehend in it the whole mighty mass surnamed of Christ and living under HIS true Gospel and its institutes, from side to side of the earth, and from beginning to end of the Church's dispensation! They leave out none, among whom the real children of the kingdom are thus visibly organized.

3. We shall bring our subject into new light, if we look a moment at the definition, which makes the Episcopacy essential to the very being of the Visible Church. This definition rests on the theory that this Episcopacy is a necessary ministerial intervention between God and man for the conveyance of the gift of the Spirit, union with Christ, and the pardon of sin. Now, the thoroughly unscriptural character of this theory is, to my mind, settled by this one consideration; that it virtually puts two mediators between God and his creatures; while the Bible puts but one. The Bible says;—"There is but one God, and ONE Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."* And when it says; "there is one Mediator between God and men," it means, that there is BUT one; as necessarily as, when it says "there is one God," it means, that there is BUT one. We may as well contend, against this

*I Tim. ii; 5.

text, that there are two Gods, in any sense, as to say that there are, in any sense, two Mediators. But this, the theory in question, does say:—First, it puts, between men and God, the ONE Mediator, Christ Jesus; and then it puts, between men and Christ Jesus, its second Mediator, a mediating priesthood, as a necessary intervention, without which there is no authorized way for the conveyance of the gift of the Spirit, union with Christ, and the pardon of sin. It does not call this priesthood, or the individual, who officiates therein, a Mediator, in the same sense, in which Christ is THE Mediator; but, it does consider this priesthood, or the individual, who officiates therein, as a Mediation; offering, for the purpose of conveying, the same sacrifice with Christ; and constituting the only authorized way of dispensing the inestimable blessings, which that sacrifice has purchased. If the theory admit that these blessings are ever received without this secondary mediation, it still holds that, without this secondary mediation, men have no right to look for those blessings; that to such those blessings come—not by covenant, but without covenant; that they are, in fact, "uncovenanted mercies," such as, perhaps, the heathen may experience.

Probably this is one of the most unscriptural and one of the most dangerous tenets, ever held; and we might spend hours in shewing how the Bible every where confutes it, and how history every where exposes its perilousness. We might shew how the Bible continually holds up Christ alone, as the only "Days-man," between God and his creatures, that needs to "lay His hand upon both;" how it as continually invites every poor, distressed, and broken-hearted sinner to come immediately and directly to this Christ, even if it be in the solitude of the heart, of the closet, or of the desert; and how it calls every man, by faith, to bow his head under that pardoning and spirit-giving hand, which this true Mediator raises and stretches man-ward, while with the other He reaches and touches God-ward; so that, thus, the true connecting links being joined, the life and all the communicable fullness of the Infinite Father, through the Infinite Son, may descend and

abide upon the believing child: they alone, with none and nothing between them. And then, we might shew how history repeatedly reveals the perilousness of interposing a mediating priesthood between the sinner and the Savior, as a necessary, or the only authorized channel of grace; how this awfully arrogated power has been most awfully abused; and how, in the hands of such a creature as man, it can never fail to be abused to some of the worst of purposes. We might go into all the details of this great branch of our subject. But it is not necessary to my purpose. A glance at it is enough. The Bible is against this theory. This theory erects, as necessary to the being of the Visible Church, an intervention, which the Bible does not necessitate; which, in the prerogatives claimed for it, the Bible sweeps clean away. The Visible Church Catholic, therefore, cannot be limited by this theory. All, that is necessary to constitute the being of the Church Spiritual—the gift of the Spirit, union with Christ, and pardon of sin—may be obtained, is obtained, without such an intervention as this theory supposes. And wherever the Church Spiritual is present and imbodies itself under the outward forms and ordinances of the Gospel of Christ, there a portion of the Visible Church Catholic is present also; though it may exist under many disadvantages, and with the loss of many things, in which its well-being might reasonably rejoice.

We are now prepared for some more definite account of the Visible Church Catholic in its true comprehension. It may, then, be described as comprehending the whole visible company on earth of those, who profess faith in Christ, maintain the preaching of his Gospel, are united by the common bond of His sacraments, and are infected with no heresy, subversive of the true Christian faith.

The mercy of a Savior, the mission of the Spirit, and the messages of the inspired Word of God, have been given for the great end of saving the souls of men from sin and eternal death. These infinite blessings have been operating in the world from the early ages; and the whole sum of their effects, in any age, the whole company of the saved, when outwardly

imbodied, constitutes the Visible Church Catholic of that age. This Church is that whole company of the saved coming out into visibility under the forms necessary to their outward manifestation; and these forms are, the preaching of the true Gospel, the profession of the true faith, and a common union in the sacraments, which Christ has ordained. These are the chief things, in which their visibility, as a Church, must be made manifest. Their persons may be made visible by flesh and blood; but their Church character cannot truly be made visible without these necessary forms. It must be borne in mind, however, that, in thus coming out into visibility, the Church is no longer the one, pure, and holy Church of Christ, but an immense congregation of outward professors of Christ, mixed, imperfect, and more or less defiled with error, worldliness, and sin. It is the "net," filled with "every kind," the "good and the bad;" it is the "kingdom," thick sown and growing both with "wheat" and with "tares."

Viewed in this light, no one visible organization can, by itself, and to the exclusion of all others, be called THE Church of Christ, or the Catholic Church. The Church of Rome is not the Catholic Church; nor is that of Greece, or that of England, or all these together, the Catholic Church. This term, as we now seek its comprehension, covers the whole visible company of Christ's professed followers on earth, so far as they hold the true faith, and are united by the common bond of Christ's sacraments. The very signification of the word, Catholic, points to this comprehension of the Visible Church. It means, "the whole;" not any part, or parts. It signifies "Universal," not particular; and it is unwarrantable assumption in any one organization, or in any number of members, short of "the whole," to call itself, or themselves, "the Catholic Church." This comprehends the whole universal company of Christ's professed followers, holding to Him as Head, to His Truth, in the main, uncorrupt, and to His sacraments, in all things necessary to their being.

This is the doctrine of our nineteenth Article, when rightly understood. "The Visible Church is a congregation of faithful

men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all things that of necessity are requisite to the same." Here are taught two things: 1. The Church, "a congregation of faithful men;" not any local congregation, but the whole company of true believers in the world; 2. The visibility of this Church, evinced in "the preaching of the pure word of God, and in "the due administration of the sacraments, according to Christ's ordinance, in all things necessarily requisite to the same." As the great, universal company "of faithful men," or true believers, in all the world, it is the one, true, spiritual Church of Christ. But as organized under "the preaching of the pure Word of God, and the due administration of the sacraments," it is the Visible Church Catholic; mixed, imperfect, divided, and much defiled with errors, more or less serious.

That our Article intends to give the Visible Church Catholic this comprehension, is evident from the fact, that it says nothing of what constitutes the essence of the ministry, or of what it is, that "of necessity, is requisite to the due administration of the sacraments, according to Christ's ordinance." It leaves both these points at large, and undetermined; and I suppose it is hazarding nothing to assert, that it would be impossible to get our Church to say, through her authoritative Councils, that there can be no Christian ministry at all, unless Episcopally constituted; and no Christian sacraments at all, unless Episcopally administered. In the preface to her ordination service, she says that there is, and since "the Apostles' times," ever has been, an Episcopal ministry; and, of course, sacraments Episcopally administered. But, even there, she says not, that there can be no such thing as a Christian ministry, or Christian sacraments, without the Episcopacy. She hath never promulged such a decision; and I hesitate not to repeat, she cannot be made to pass, authoritatively, such a sentence. She proclaims herself a true Church; and she leaves others to the liberty of proclaiming the same for themselves; and, if they can, of proving what they proclaim.

In my next discourse, I propose to shew that the view, now taken of the Visible Church Catholic, is still more largely sustained by the Standards and the standard writers of our Communion. For the present, it must suffice to have introduced this branch of the subject; and now to ask, upon what has been said, God's rich and abundant blessing. May the large and liberal spirit of our Zion rest, in its fullness, on every son, whom she numbers among her children.

DISCOURSE VII.

"So were the Churches established in the faith."—Acts xvi; 5.

The Christian faith is exactly comprehensive of the Christian Church. The former is the true boundary of the latter. When this faith, true and sound, is received into the heart, producing a holy and living union with Christ, it constitutes a member of the true, Spiritual, or Invisible Church Catholic. And when this faith, in the main whole and uncorrupt, is carried out into profession, under the appropriate forms, it constitutes a member of the real Visible Church Catholic. And so, in both senses, the Christian faith is the only true comprehension of the Christian Church. This faith, or the substance of what Christ requires to be believed, is the grand, all-essential thing in this inquiry. A renunciation of this is, to all intents and purposes, a renunciation of the Church. Hence, near the close of my last discourse, in describing the Church in its external Catholicism, it was represented as comprehending the whole visible company on earth, of those who profess faith in Christ, maintain the preaching of His Gospel, are united by the common bond of His sacraments, and are infected with no heresy subversive of the true Christian faith. This last mark was added, because a heresy, which really subverts the true and whole Christian faith, may well be considered as effecting a severance from the Visible Christian Church. In the Apostles' days, as we learn from the passage, Acts xvi; 5, "the Churches were established in the faith." A subversion of the

faith must, therefore, so far as it extends, be considered a subversion of the Church. To the same extent, a corruption of the faith, which amounts not to its subversion, is but a corruption of the Church. It amounts not to its subversion. Save the substance of the faith in its outward profession, and you save the substance of the Church in its visible Catholicism.

I. This, as I have already remarked, is the view of the Visible Church Catholic, which is taken by our own Standards, and our best standard writers: a remark to the brief illustration of which I now invite attention.

1. In looking at our Standards, then, we may refer again to our XIXth Article. It defines "the Visible Church of Christ" to be, as to its essence, "a Congregation of faithful men;" and then, as to its visibility, that congregation, that whole company, "in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that, of necessity, are requisite to the same." Wherever the great congregation of true believers come out into profession, under the preaching of the true Gospel, and a due administration of Christ's sacraments, in all things necessary thereto, there, according to this Article, the true Visible Church of Christ exists. What is, indeed, necessary to the due administration of these sacraments, the Article does not decide. Individual writers may be found, in sufficient numbers, who strenuously contend that, to the very essence of these sacraments, an Episcopal ministry is necessary; that, without this ministry, there is and can be no such thing as a Christian sacrament. But this decision our Church has not pronounced, and cannot be made authoritatively to declare. So far is she from this, that her highest authorities in England, following in this the voice of antiquity, have decided that even lay-baptism, however irregular, is nevertheless valid, and ought not to be repeated. Her Article, therefore, does, by no means, teach that the Visible Church of Christ is confined to the limits of Episcopally administered sacraments. It is one thing, to say that non-Episcopal bodies, as separate organizations, are, in the full sense, regular Churches; and quite another, to say that their members belong to the one Visible

Catholic Church of Christ. The former, an Episcopalian needs not to assert; to the latter it behooves him very steadfastly to hold.

2. But, without dwelling longer on the Article, let us proceed to other testimony. In our Communion service is the prayer, entitled, "For the whole state of Christ's Church militant." This, I understand of the Visible Church on earth, of this Church, as militant, or warring against those deadly foes within itself, sin, error and superstition; as well as against those leagued enemies without, "the world, the flesh, and the Devil." Of whom, then, according to this solemn and authorized form, does the Visible, or, as it is here termed, "the Universal Church" of Christ, His whole, or Catholic Church, in its visibility, consist? Hear the witness. Of "all, who do confess His holy name." For all these, and none less, the prayer goes up, that they may, as is most desirable, be "inspired with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord;" or, that they "may agree in the truth of His holy Word, and live in unity and godly love:" and that "their Bishops, and other ministers, may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth His true and lively Word, and rightly and duly administer His holy sacraments." This testimony is very emphatic. "The Universal," or Catholic "Church" of Christ, is expressly defined as made up of "all who do confess His holy name;" and its visibility is here, as in the article, considered as coming out, in this confession, under the appointed forms of the preaching of the "true and lively Word," and of the "right and due administration of the holy sacraments." It is true, that more is expressed here than in the Article. There is a distinct intimation that *we* have adopted, and hold fast to, an Episcopal ministry; though without any claim that this ministry is indispensably necessary to the being of the sacraments. We ask "grace," here, not merely for "all Bishops, Presbyters and Deacons," but, for "all Bishops and other ministers," ALL other ministers: in short, for all who minister to the "all who do confess Christ's holy name," and who thus make part of "the whole," or universal, "state of His Church militant." This prayer, and the ancient liturgies, in which it stands, were doubtless framed

in times when there was none but an Episcopal ministry. But, it has been adopted, both in England and in this country, with the knowledge and the virtual acknowledgement of the fact, that there are now, in some true sense, ministers of Christ who have never been Episcopally ordained.

3. This freedom of our Prayer-Book language from all particularizing, its large generalness of expression, is somewhat remarkable. Another instance of it occurs in the last prayer, at "the Institution of Ministers." We there pray for "the Church," "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone;" "that, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, *all* Christians may be so joined together in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace, that they may be an holy temple, acceptable unto God." This language is broad as possible. It knows no "foundation" to the Church, narrower than "Christ;" and no "temple" for the visible Zion smaller than that which contains "ALL Christians." In one sense, this is a prayer of sorrows. It looks sadly on this world-wide Church of Christ, and sees it agitated, divided, and, in many things, defiled. In another sense, however, it is a prayer of faith. It looks encouragingly on this Church universal, and, in the bending of strong, hopeful entreaty, sees the time, when the true "unity," that "of the Spirit," and the true "bond," that of "Peace," shall embrace and bind together in love "all Christians," all who profess the name and faith of Christ; and when, thus, the Church visible shall, as nearly as earth will allow, become identical with the Church spiritual. And, in this character, it is a prayer, into which every large-hearted disciple of Christ delights to put his whole soul of believing, trustful intercession.

4. In the "Prayer for all conditions of men," we have another instance of this large generalness of language. We there "pray for the holy Church universal;" "that all who profess and call themselves Christians" "may," "by the guidance and governance of God's good Spirit," "be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." This prayer, let it be remembered, was not in the ancient liturgies. It is of English,

Protestant origin; and was framed, it is alleged, by the great and good Bishop Sanderson, of Lincoln. His views of the comprehension of the Visible Church are, as we shall see, well known; and there can be no doubt that, when this formula speaks of the "holy Church universal" as embracing "all who profess and call themselves Christians," it means to include, not only all the ancient and Episcopal communions, but also all the then modern, Reformed, and Protestant bodies, though all of these were not Episcopally constituted. It means, says our American Bishop Brownell, "the Oriental, the Greek, the Latin, the Reformed, with every denomination of Christians."* When the English Church, and our American Episcopal after them, adopted this prayer into their solemn Liturgy, they not only prayed, (with the heart of every true follower of Christ saying, Amen,) that "the faith may be held in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life," but also taught, (with whatever of authority they possess,) that the "Church universal" includes,—amid whatever of present agitation, division, and corruption, still in the hope of future peace, union, and purity—"all who profess and call themselves Christians." The profession of the true Christian faith; the calling themselves of Christ; the putting of themselves forth before the world under the accustomed forms of Christian profession, under the preaching of the pure Gospel and the due reception of Christ's sacraments, are here, by specially PROTESTANT witnessing, set forth as the true, comprehending lines of the whole visible Body of Christ.

5. This strong view comes out, with a governing power, in the language used in our American "Preface" to the Book of Common Prayer; an official document of the highest consideration, set forth by authority of our highest Council, the General Convention of 1789. The language to which I refer, is this: "But when, in the course of divine Providence, these American States became independent with respect to civil government, their ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included; and the different religious denominations of Chris-

* Commentary on Book of Common Prayer.

tians in these states were left at full and equal liberty to model and organize their respective CHURCHES, and forms of worship and discipline in such manner as they might judge most convenient for their future prosperity; consistently with the constitution and laws of their country."

Here the non-Episcopal communions of the United States are acknowledged to be "Churches." It is not admissible to say that this word is here used loosely and by courtesy; or that, while the term, Church, belongs exclusively to us, that of "religious denominations of Christians" is the appropriate description of others. The language which I have quoted, is not that of mere careless politeness. It is that of strictly serious intent. It has become fashionable, in certain quarters, to restrict the term, Church, to ourselves, and to apply that of "religious denominations of Christians" to others. But our highest Council, that which first gave form to our Church in this land, applies this latter description to ourselves as well as to others. When it speaks of "the different religious denominations of Christians in these states," as being "left at full and equal liberty to model and organize their respective Churches," it includes all: it calls ourselves, as well as the rest, "a religious denomination of Christians." When, therefore, it declares that all these denominations had "full and equal liberty to model and organize their respective Churches," it admits that they are ALL Churches; it concedes the essence of Church character to others, as seriously and as strictly as it claims the essence of that character for ourselves. I say not, that it concedes to them the same regularness, perfectness, or scripturalness of Church character, which, in other documents, we claim for ourselves; but, that it concedes to them the *essence* of that character as seriously and as strictly as it claims the essence of that character for ourselves. Any other inference makes our Church an insincere, equivocating courtier, when speaking of the things of God in her highest, most dignified capacity, on one of the greatest, most solemn crises of her history. She hath not thus degraded herself. She is erect in high-minded integrity. She hath seriously conceded to non-Episcopalians the essence of Church character. And this is the reason,

why, at least till she loses her Protestantism, she cannot be made to utter the authoritative decision, that the Episcopacy is necessary to the being of a Church; or that the non-Episcopal denominations are no Churches.

So far, then, as our Standards are concerned, the testimony may be considered ample in favor of the view, which I have given of the Visible Church Catholic; that it comprehends the whole visible company, on earth, of those who profess the Christian faith, maintain the preaching of the Gospel, are united by the common bond of sacraments, and are infected by no heresy subversive of the true and whole faith of Christ.

II. Let us now look, a moment, at the testimony of our Standard writers. It will be found luminous on the point of which I treat. By our standard writers, I mean those of our Protestant Reformation; those who lived in the country where this Reformation took place, and in the century adjoining that in which it happened: the English writers of the seventeenth century.

1. Dr. Thomas Jackson, of Newcastle, (already quoted,) writing in the early part of that century, and one of the most eminent of the great men of that great age, in his "Treatise of the holy Catholic Faith and Church," after defining "the Church in its prime," or spiritual "sense," uses this language: "In a secondary analogical sense, every present visible Church, which holdeth the holy Catholic faith, without which no man can be saved, pure and undefiled with the traditions or inventions of men, may be termed a holy Catholic Church;" not only Catholic, but holy. "Who they be," he adds, "which profess the unity of that faith" "is visible and known to all such as either hear them profess it, *viva voce*, or can read and understand their profession of it given in writing."* And, to shew that, by the phrase, "every present visible Church," he does not mean, every Episcopal organization alone, he goes on to speak of "such a communion," as existed "between the orthodoxal professors of the English, or other Reformed Churches,"† and of Luther and Christian princes, by God's

* Treatise on the Holy Catholic Faith and Church, p. 152. Phil. 1844.
† Treatise, etc., p. 154.

appointment, uniting the visible members of the holy Catholic Church into visible Churches."*

Indeed, in those days of close searching into the essence and nature of things spiritual and ecclesiastical, there was no idea, among this class of English divines, of shutting the Reformed Continental Churches out of the pale of visible Catholicism. Hence Bishop Hall, even while lamenting their want of Episcopal order, yet, in view of their holding the true faith of the Gospel, affectionately terms them "the Church of England's dearest sisters abroad."† Jackson's definition, therefore, of the Visible Church, spreads itself over the whole ground which we have been surveying. To make the Visible Church holy, it must, according to him, hold the Catholic faith pure and undefiled. But, if it hold this faith, corrupted "by traditions and inventions of men," though it thereby ceases to be a holy, yet it does not thereby cease to be a visible Church, or a portion of the one visible Church Catholic on earth. This Church may and generally does exist in a state far from pure and holy.

2. Again, Bishop Sanderson, of Lincoln, the alleged author of our "Prayer for all conditions of men," utters a most apposite definition on this point. After having given that which I formerly quoted when speaking of the spiritual, or invisible Church, he immediately adds: "The whole company of all those, throughout the world, who, by their doctrine and worship, do outwardly make profession of the name of Christ; this we call the Universal Visible Church; or the Catholic Christian Church." And then, to shew in what various conditions this universal Visible Church may exist, and what it is that utterly subverts it, he says: "A total and utter defection from the whole faith of Christ, in doctrine and in worship, destroys the very being of a Church, and maketh it no Church at all. But, a defection from the purity of faith doth not take away the being of a Church: (it remains still a true Church;) but only maketh it an impure and corrupt Church, and, so far forth, a false Church." "Corruptions in doctrine and worship,

* Treatise, etc., p. 158. Phil. 1844. † Hall's Sermon on Noah's Dove.

as they are greater or lesser, so they make a Church more or less, comparatively"* corrupt.

Upon the entire coincidence of all this with the view, which I have given of the Visible Church Catholic, I need not stop to comment. It makes the true distinction between what is necessary to the being, and what is requisite to the well-being of this Church.

The same writer repeatedly speaks of "the Protestant Churches," (meaning that of England and those of the Continent,) as standing together on the "substance of faith;" being "more or less reformed in doctrine and worship;" and constituting "particular visible Churches."†

3. Again: Cosin, afterwards Bishop of Durham, and a most strenuous Churchman, calls the French Protestants, in the middle of the seventeenth century, "Reformed Churches," and discountenances a refusal of their Communion, when the plea urged for such refusal, is that, "for want of Episcopal ordination they have no order at all;" that is, no ministerial ordination. "If, upon this ground," says he, "we renounce the French, we must, for the very same reason, renounce all the ministers of Germany besides;" "and then, what will become of the Protestant party?" "If the Church and kingdom of England have acknowledged them, (as they" have etc.,) "why should we, that are but private persons, utterly disclaim their Communion?"‡ This, coming from such a person, is, perhaps, one of the most striking testimonies to the truth that Episcopal ordination is not indispensable to the being, though, in our judgment, it certainly is to the well-being of the Visible Church.

4. Once more; the great Hooker hesitates not to speak thus strongly: "If, by external profession, they be Christians, then they are the Visible Church of Christ; and Christians by external profession, they are all, whose mark of recognizance hath in it those things, which we have mentioned, (one Lord,

* Discourse on the Visibility of the true Church, in Hooker's Collection, Phil. 1844, pp. 213—215.

† Discourse, etc., Hooker's Collection, pp. 222—224.

‡ Letter to Cordel, ibid. p. 234.

one faith, one baptism,) yea, although they be impious idolaters, wicked heretics, persons excommunicable." And then to the question, whether it be possible for such persons, belonging, as they really do, "to the Synagogue of Satan," to belong also "to the Church of Jesus Christ," he answers, in the very spirit of my whole argument, "unto that Church which is His mystical Body," it is "not possible" for such persons to belong: "because that Body consisteth of none but only true Israelites, true sons of Abraham, true servants and saints of God." But, "of the visible Body and Church of Jesus Christ, those may be and often are"* members, who answer the fearful description just given. Undoubtedly then, according to this writer, *they* belong to this Church, who, are neither impious idolaters nor wicked heretics, but who, in their outward profession, hold the truth in the main uncorrupt, and, in their outward lives, walk with becoming consistency to their profession, notwithstanding, in the order of their ministry, they lack what we deem requisite to its fullness.

5. To the same effect, though, if possible, stronger still, is the language of Bishop Hall. "It is not the variety of by-opinions that can exclude them from having their part in that one Catholic Church, and their just claim to the Communion of Saints. While they hold the solid and precious foundation, it is not the hay or stubble, which they lay upon it, that can set them off from God or His Church." And then, after lamenting, in the most impassioned strain, the numerous dissensions and errors, which have crept in among Christians, he proceeds thus to assert that they do not destroy the real oneness of the visible Church. "Notwithstanding all this hideous variety of vain and heterodoxal conceptions, He, who is the truth of God and the Bridegroom of His Church, hath said—'My Dove, my undefiled, is one;' one in the main, essential, fundamental verities necessary to salvation, though differing in divers mis-raised corollaries, inconsequent inferences, unnecessary additions, feigned traditions, unwarrantable practices. The Body is one, though the garments differ; yea, rather, for

* Ecclesiastical Polity, Book iii., § 1.

most of these, the garment is one, but differs in the dressing; handsomely and comely set out by some, disguised by another. Neither is it, or ever shall be, in the power of all the fiends of hell, the professed make-baits of the world, to make God's Church other than one: which were, indeed, utterly to extinguish and reduce it to nothing; for the unity and entity of the Church can no more be divided than itself." "Those, that agree in all the main principles of religion, Christ is pleased to admit, for matter of doctrine, as members of that Body whereof He is the Head: and if they admit not of each other as such, the fault is in the uncharitableness of the refusers, no less than in the error of the refused. If any vain and loose stragglers will needs sever themselves, and willfully choose to go ways of their own, let them know that the union of Christ's Church shall consist entire without them. This great ocean will be one collection of waters, when these drops are lost in the dust."*

6. And finally, Bishop Taylor, declaring in what sense the word, Church, is applied to this mixed, and often distracted Body, says: "the word, Church," "may be, and is, given to them by way of supposition, and legal presumption, as a jury of twelve men are called 'good men and true;' that is they are not known to be otherwise, and are therefore presumed to be such: and they are the Church, in all human accounts; that is, they are the congregation of all that profess the name of Christ; in which are the wheat and the tares; and they are bound up in common by the union of sacraments and external rites, name and profession; but in nothing else."†

To estimate the true value of these testimonies, from our old writers, to the view, which I have given of the Visible Catholic Church, it must be borne in mind that they belong to the age, which closely follows that of the Reformation itself; that they write in view of the great outstanding fact that a large portion of the Reformed Body is without an Episcopal ministry; and that they are in the habit of speaking of this portion as "the Reformed Churches."

* Bishop Hall's Treatise of Christ Mystical, chapter vii., § 2.

† Taylor's Dissuasive from Popery, Part ii., B. I., Sect. i., §§ i. and ii.

This whole discussion about the character of the Visible Church might, it is true, under ordinary circumstances, and to some minds, be uninteresting, and even deemed unprofitable. But, it cannot be so considered, when we remember that the circumstances of the times, in which we live, are very extraordinary. We live in a day, when multitudes in the midst of us are laboring to upheave the very foundations of our Protestantism, and to deprive of all claim to the very name of a Church, those whom our own ecclesiastical fathers have acknowledged as belonging to the great visible Body of Christ. This effort can never succeed without putting in jeopardy our own integrity, if not our own existence, as a Church; nor, what is worse, without undermining all that is most precious in the Gospel of Christ, as we receive it from "the Living Oracles" of God! Under such circumstances, every thing, touching right views of even the Visible Church, links itself vitally with the Christian teacher's great theme, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." We must lose our interest in this all-essential, all-enlivening heart of the Gospel, before we can become indifferent to the great question, What is the true comprehension of the Visible Church? or, to the efforts, which are made to exclude from it some of the most marked portions of the professed followers of Christ.

In speaking thus, I would be considered, not the apologist of non-Episcopalians, but the advocate of essentially true Church principles. That any portion of the Visible Church is without the Episcopacy, is to me, for sufficient reasons, a matter of sincere grief. But, whatever be my judgment of their condition, it would be a matter, not merely of real grief, but of conscious wrong, were I to lay at the basis of the Visible Church a principle, which, in its operation, cuts off any, who, by the laws of truth and right, belong to its great corporation.

Other questions, touching the Visible Church, remain for consideration. The Lord give us all a discerning spirit—the spirit of Light—to guide us through the many confusions of time, and to bring us, at last, to that Church in eternity, whose members are all "saints in light."

DISCOURSE VIII.

"God hath set some in the Church; first, Apostles; secondarily, Prophets; thirdly, teachers."—1 Cor. xii; 28.

The Church Catholic, in its divine holiness, and in its actual visibleness; what each truly comprehends, and what is necessary to the actual being of each; this is the subject upon which the present series has thus far been engaged. Christ, and the members really united with Him by the Spirit, in a living and a holy faith; this is the Spiritual Church Catholic: Christ, and the members professedly united with Him, under the preaching of His Gospel and the sealing of His sacraments; this is the Visible Church Catholic: each in its essence, in what is necessary to its existence.

And here, were I dealing simply with principles, with the truths of God's Word, and the essentials of His Church, I might leave the subject; not because, even in this view, it is exhausted, but because enough has been said to clear the one point, at which I have been aiming; the true comprehension of the Church of Christ.

But, since it is evident that I am dealing—not with principles alone, but—with men, and the practical working out of principles, it is also evident that I am bound to consider not only what is necessary to the being of the Church, but also what is requisite to its well-being; what was designed to conduce to its order, its permanency and its prosperity.

I. The main requisites to this well-being of the Church are doubtless to be found in a faithful preaching of the Gospel, and in a due administration of the sacraments of Christ.—But, both these, as reason may infer and as the Scriptures teach, imply A MINISTRY, whose office it is both to preach the Gospel and to administer the sacraments. And this ministry is of God. "GOD hath set some in the Church; first, Apostles; secondarily, Prophets; thirdly teachers." Whatever name this ministry may, at different times, have borne; by whatever varying forms it may have successively been modified; and through whatever outward channel it may, at its first beginning, have descended; it came from God, and not from man: its authority is divine, and not human.

I have selected for consideration the passage, I Cor. xii; 28, not so much on account of its numerals, its "first, secondarily, and thirdly," as for two other reasons. It shews, as we have just seen, that the ministry of the Church is from God; "God hath set it in the Church:" and yet, it shews that this ministry is not the Church, but only "some" of its members, "set" in peculiar stations, and with special authority, "in the Church." Its officers are "set in the Church." The Church is not, as some hold, set in its officers. The distinction between these two views is very important. When writers of a well known school speak of the Church, they speak as though they had nothing in view but its ministry; as though in this ministry its very being were involved; insomuch that, without this ministry, the Church itself would cease to exist. But, look into the chapter, from which this passage is taken, and see how very different is the view there given. "As the Body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one Body, being many, are one Body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles; whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the Body is not one member, but many." "God hath set the members, every one of them, in the Body as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the Body? But now are they

many members, yet but one Body."* Here Christ is likened to a human body; a head, with many members; and all together constituting one body. This Body, not its ministry alone, but this whole Body, with its Head and many members, constitutes the Church; and in this Church "God hath set some" of the members as ministers, in places of peculiar eminence and importance; just as, in the human fabric, He hath assigned corresponding stations to the eye, the ear, and the hand. Now, we may as well say that the human body consists in the eye, and ear, and hand; or that it cannot exist without these important members; as that the Church, the Body of Christ, consists in its ministry, those members whom "God hath set" in places of peculiar eminence; or that it cannot exist without this ministry. Suppose the eye were gone, or the ear, or the hand, or all these together; still the body would not be gone. So long as there are a head, thinking, knowing, and governing; a heart, living, pulsing and feeling; and animal functions, receiving, digesting and distributing; so long as head, and heart, and animal functions remain, the body remains, though it have not eye, or ear, or hand; yea, though it want all these at once. Under this want, it would indeed be a maimed, imperfect, suffering body: still, it would be a body, with life, and soul, and action, and somewhat of enjoyment. So, from the Church, suppose a part or the whole of its ministry were gone, still, the Church itself would not be gone. So long as Christ, its thinking, knowing, governing Head; and the Spirit, its living, pulsing, quickening Heart; and "the many members," its receiving, digesting, distributing organism; so long as these remained, the Church itself would remain; though it had not its higher, its middle, or its lower ministries; yea, though it wanted all its ministries at once. Under this deprivation, it is true, it would be a maimed, imperfect, suffering Church; still it would be a Church; and might have life, spirit, and action, and somewhat of a divine joy.

1. This view shews the difference between the ministry, as being "set in the Church;" and the Church, as consisting or

* I Cor. xii; 12—14, 18, 19

being organized in the ministry. It solves the problem, whether the members make the ministry, or the ministry the members, of the Church? by shewing, that the truth lies on neither side the question. Certainly the ministry do not make the members of the Church; and as certainly the members do not make the ministry. Each, indeed, has somewhat to do in recognizing the other; but neither makes the other. God makes them both; fits them each for the other, and sets them both together in Christ. Just as in the human organism; the eye does not make the ear, nor the hand the foot; but God makes them all; fits them all to serve and help each other, and sets them all together in the body. This truth is too often left out of sight. The whole Church, whether as spiritual, or as visible, is God's work, not man's. True, He uses men in this work; and He uses the common members in making the ministry, as really as He uses the ministry in making common members. Still, the work itself is His. The Church is "His workmanship." He "sets all the members," "every one of them," in it; the lower as well as the higher. Without His authority and agency, whether as inward or as outward, the Church would not exist; and these are the only things, without which it cannot exist.

2. Again; the view given in the chapter, from which the passage is taken, shews the distinction between the being of the Church, and its well-being; between what is essential to its existence, and what is requisite to its fulness, perfectness, and comfort. The eye, the ear, and the hand are certainly requisite to the fulness, the perfectness, and the comfort of the human body; and yet, if each and every one of these were lost, the being, the essence of the body would remain, so long as the head, the heart, and the animal functions were left untouched and in living action. It were folly to lose sight of the difference between what is thus necessary to the being and life of the body, and what is thus requisite to its best, most effective, and most happy being. It is unspeakably important to have a body with *all* its members, especially its *chief* members; a body full, perfect, strong, and able to do every thing for which it was designed: but, for the purposes of this world, it is better

to have a body, with the loss of some even of its most important members, than to have no body at all. So, in the things of Christ, a ministry is certainly requisite to the fulness, the perfectness, and the welfare of the Church: and yet, if a part, or the whole of this ministry should, by possibility, be lost, the being, the essence of the Church would remain, so long as Christ, the Spirit, and the great organism of members remained in divine life and activity. It were equal folly to lose sight of the difference between what is thus necessary to the being and life of the Church, and what is thus requisite to its best, most effective, and most happy being. We cannot overrate the importance of having a Church, with its whole organism of members, ministry and all, complete, perfect, healthy, and able to do every thing, for which it was constituted: but, for the purposes of both worlds, it is better to have a Church, with the loss of some even of its chiefest members, of a part, or the whole of its ministry, than to have no Church at all; than to lose Christ, and the Spirit, and the great "Communion of Saints" from off the earth and out of Heaven; than to lose Head, and Heart, and the whole living organism from among all the offspring of the Infinite Father.

It may be urged, that if, by possibility, the ministry should be lost, though the Church would remain for a time, yet, by the death of its members, and for want of a ministry formally to initiate their successors, it would, in the course of one natural generation, expire. But, this is not a far-sighted view. So long as Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the Word of living truth coming from them both, remain in the world, God can make and ingraft a succession of members into the Body of Christ, which is His Church, even without the hand of an ordained ministry. True, a Church, thus perpetuated, would, as a visible Body, be a maimed, an imperfect Church. Still, it would be a Church; and, for God's purposes, unspeakably better than no Church at all.

But, whatever be the difference between the being, and the well-being of the Church, we have this to comfort us: the ministry is not lost; nor, while Christ's promise remains true, can it ever be lost. What is thus requisite to the well-being

of the Church, the Church has, and will have; at least till Christ comes again and puts Himself once more into the place of all ministries.

II. This ministry, then, thus durably existent, and thus requisite to the well-being of the Church,—what is it? That its commission of authority is from Christ; that God, not man, "hath set it in the Church," and in eminence, as "some" among the "many members," to serve and be served in the weal and working of the whole Body, we have already seen. But, what is this commission of authority, this eminence among the members, with which "God hath set the ministry in the Church?" This question leads us into a subject too wide for argument in this place; and, therefore, I must content myself with a simple confession of my faith, that it may stand, for the present, instead of any long array of proofs.

1. I begin this confession, then, in the words, which, in the Preface to her Ordinal, or form of Ordaining, our Church herself puts into my mouth; and which I am prepared to utter out of my heart.

"It is evident," says this document, "unto all men, diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient authors, that, from the Apostles' time, there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church; Bishops, Priests, and Deacons. Which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as are requisite for the same; and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereunto by lawful authority. And therefore, to the intent that these orders may be continued and reverently used and esteemed in this Church, no man shall be accounted or taken to be a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in this Church, or suffered to execute any of the said functions, except he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereunto, according to the form hereafter following, or hath had Episcopal consecration, or ordination."

This confession, it will be seen, settles, *for us*, several points. First; that, "from the Apostles' time, there have been in Christ's Church three orders of ministers; Bishops,

Presbyters, and Deacons." It says not, from Christ's time; but "from the Apostles' time." The simple commission and authority of the ministry, it receives from Christ himself, as left by Him "in His Church." But the distribution of this commission and authority among three orders it traces no farther back than the Apostles. Christ put the authority and commission upon them; they distributed that authority and commission among three orders of ministers. In what this distribution consisted, what special powers, or prerogatives, were assigned to each of the three orders, is a query, which this confession does not touch. It merely asserts the fact of such distribution, and the existence of this fact "in Christ's Church," "from the Apostles' time."

Second: that for the exercise of any office under this threefold ministry, it was "evermore" necessary that the incumbent should be "tried," found possessed of "the requisite qualifications" and "admitted by lawful authority." Where this "lawful authority" was primarily lodged, is also a question, which this confession toucheth not: it merely decides, inferentially, that any entrance into this threefold ministry, save through the door of such lawful authority, was "evermore" held to be an usurpation, a thing null of itself.

And third; that, "in THIS Church," this Protestant Episcopal Church of ours, the threefold ministry shall be perpetuated; and that the only lawful way of entrance into any of its three orders shall be through OUR prescribed forms of trial, and of ordination by Bishops, or through some other equivalent Episcopal acts. Here the full Episcopacy comes out, as our unalterable regimen. It is said—not that the trine ministry, must, to the exclusion of every other form, be perpetuated in CHRIST'S Church, or in the Church as necessary to its existence;—but, that this ministry shall, as a fact, be perpetuated "in THIS Church," this Protestant Episcopal Church of ours: not that there is no possible way of entering into the ministry of CHRIST'S Church, or of THE Church, save through our forms of trial and ordination, or their equivalents; but that there shall be no other lawful way of entering into the ministry of "THIS Church," this Protestant Episcopal Church of ours. In both

places, that little word, "this," is brimful of meaning and importance. And so it is felt to be by others. Had the word been THE, instead of "this," or CHRIST'S, instead of "this," it would have made a vast difference of meaning. It would have made our Ordinal declare what our Church herself has never declared; and what,—I repeat,—till she loses her Protestantism, she cannot be made, by her high authorities, to declare; that, without an Episcopacy, there can be no such thing as a ministry in the Church of Christ. Any one may, if he choose, privately hold such an opinion. But our Church by her authorities has never enforced it: she does not here enforce it, upon either her members or her ministers. She merely declares that, within her limits and jurisdiction, nothing but an Episcopacy shall be lawful.*

Once more; the confession, which I am now upon, declares: that, "to all men diligently reading holy Scripture and ancient authors, it is evident," as a matter of fact, that there has been a trine ministry "in the Church of Christ" ever since "the Apostles' time." It declares that this fact makes itself "evident unto all diligent readers" of those olden records. And for this, from the heart, I contend. The confession says, not that this evidence runs back into Christ, but that it runs back unto the Apostles; and that this evidence lies, not on the "Scriptures" alone, but, on the "Scriptures and ancient authors." And I profess I cannot impeach this confession of rashness in what it says. The thing *is* reasonably "evident" to all who thus read both the testimonies cited. Though the

* Suppose it were argued: that The Preface to our Ordinal asserts that, in Christ's Church there have always and every where been Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; and therefore decrees that in THIS Church, this same Church of CHRIST, no man shall be accounted a lawful Bishop, Priest, or Deacon, or be suffered to execute any of the said functions, unless he be called, tried, examined, and admitted thereto according to our form, or some other Episcopal mode, of ordaining: it would be seen that the conclusion makes our Church virtually declare that there is no Christian ministry, except such as has been Episcopally ordained; that none but such shall be allowed to officiate in the Church of Christ, in any part of the world. This would not only make her, in *theory*, unchurch a considerable part of Christendom, but also pledge her to carry the unchurching edict into practice. The truth is, that in this language, she is merely defining who shall be allowed to exercise the office of a Bishop, Priest, or Deacon in *this*, our Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.

Scriptures alone may not "evidence" this Episcopal fact to a demonstration, yet, "diligently read," they shew, by no equivocal marks, the progress, which the Apostles made in the trine distribution of the ministerial office. Taking the ministerial commission and authority itself directly from Christ, one of their first acts was to originate, by prayer and the laying on of hands, an order of Deacons. Another, of frequent recurrence, was, the "ordaining of Elders," or Presbyters. And a third was, the occasional appointment, as in the case of Timothy, Titus, and others, of general supervisors over large territories, who, whatever the powers and prerogatives of the other orders may have been, certainly had, for themselves, the power of ordaining to the ministry. Thus much, at least, is plain on the very face of the Scriptures. Whoever will "diligently read" them and not see that they make these things "evident," I am bound to ackowledge that, so far as I can form a judgment, he has a strange slowness to see, or a stranger dullness to read, evidence. This evidence, I think, cannot reasonably be put out of sight, or cross-questioned into self contradiction.

Coming, then, from the latest "Scriptures," as the writings of the Apostles, down to the earliest "ancient authors," those who began to live before the last of the Apostles died, to Clement of Rome, Polycarp of Smyrna, and Ignatius of Antioch; another thing is most "evident" to all who "diligently read" them. It is, that, to the three orders, which we have seen the Apostles arranging in the settlement of the ministry, these "ancient authors" gave distinctive names. Whatever varying names had been used before, or, however interchangeably some of those names may at first have been applied, these "ancient authors" had then settled upon three; and, having done so, used them, with a fixed and unchangeable application. They uniformily called those three grades, Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. They speak of those three grades, under these three distinctively applied names, as one of the great, outstanding facts of their times; and one of them, Ignatius, expressly declares that "there was no Church without them;"* in other words: that

* Ep. ad Trall; in Apostolical Fathers. 1st Am. ed., New York, 1810, p. 207.

in all the Churches, then known, there were Bishops, etc. Let any candid man "dilligently read" the brief epistles of these first three of the "ancient authors," and I think it will be impossible for him to doubt their views of the apostolically arranged Christian ministry. To my mind, I confess, there is not the shadow of a doubt on the point. These authors do cast the light of a credible testimony back on the Scriptures; rendering unconcealably "evident" the fact, that this apostolically arranged ministry was threefold, and that its three grades had come to be distinctively and fixedly known by the names of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons. This is just what the preface to our Ordinal asserts,—the evidentness of this great, Episcopal fact, to all "diligent readers" of those olden records; an evidentness, which, as I read, needs not argument to make it strike the eye.

This, then, is the confession of faith which I have to make; and to which, with all my heart, I am ever prepared to stand. And, having said this, I am also prepared to hear and answer a question, which will possibly be asked. It may be inquired:

If the apostles distributed the ministry, which they received, into three orders; and if their successors universally received these three orders as the established form of the Christian ministry; why do you not admit that this form of the ministry is necessary to the being of the Visible Church; insomuch that bodies, destitute of this form of the ministry, do not belong to the Church, as visible and Catholic? The question is fair and ought to be answered.

I reply, then; first, because our Church does not trace this threefold distribution of the ministry to Christ, but only to the Apostles. Second, because the Apostles themselves do not demonstrate, to the clear satisfaction of all reasonable minds, that this threefold distribution was designed, by Divine Right, to confine the power of ordination to the FIRST grade, so that ordination by the *second* should, of itself, be null: and third; because some of the greatest writers, both Romanist and Protestant, have admitted the probability that this power was not thus restricted by either Christ or His apostles. To this point, I offer the following brief quotations. Cosin, afterwards

Bishop of Durham, one of the highest, most strenuous advocates for Episcopacy, writes thus: "I conceive that the power of ordination was restrained to Bishops, rather by apostolical practice and the perpetual custom and canons of the Church, than by any absolute precept, that either Christ or His Apostles gave about it. Nor can I yet meet with any convincing argument to set it upon a more high and divine institution." Again: "There have been both learned and eminent men, as well in former ages as in this, and even among the Roman Catholics as well as Protestants, who have held and maintained it for good and passable divinity, that Presbyters have the intrinsical power of ordination, in *actu primo*:" although, as he goes on to say, in substance, "for the avoidance of schism and the preserving of order and discipline in the Church," they have, from the first, "been restrained from exercising their power, in *actu secundo*;" so that now the exercise of their power is irregular and canonically void; though "not void simply" in itself, "and in the nature of the thing."* For this opinion, he cites a catalogue of eminent continental authors, both Romish and Protestant; and, among the great lights of the English Church—Jewel, Field, Hooker, and Mason.

Such, then, in brief, and in addition to what runs through my whole argument, are my reasons for regarding Episcopacy as not absolutely necessary to the very being of the Visible Church.

And now, should another question be asked: Why, then, do you receive and insist on this Episcopacy? Why not relinquish it, if it be not wholly indispensable? I have this to answer; because, the Apostles, in distributing the ministry into three orders, acted as Christ's chosen and inspired agents. These orders, therefore, as to the fact of them, have the virtual sanction of Christ. The fact of an Episcopacy, though not all the powers with which some exclusively invest it, comes virtually from the Divine Head of the Church. Although, therefore, a real necessity may have deprived some bodies of the Episcopacy, without thereby putting them out of the

* Letter to Cordel, in Hooker's Col. Philad. 1844; p. 230, 232, 233.

Visible Church, yet a needless, voluntary relinquishment of the Episcopacy constitutes one of the forms of the fearful evil of schism; breaks the order and discipline of the Church; and hazards deeply, if not fatally, all that is precious in the spiritual and temporal well-being of the visible Body of Christ. Therefore it is, to say nothing of other reasons, that I do not relinquish the Episcopacy. Such an act, in me, would be a reckless wounding of my Savior in the very house of His friends!

This well-being of the Church shall be further considered, in my next discourse.

DISCOURSE IX.

"That there should be no schism in the Body."—I Cor. xii; 25.

The Church is the Body of Christ. As true, holy and Catholic, it is His spiritual or mystical Body; and as developed under needful forms, it is His visible Body; so called from analogy, and the serving of the outward to the inward.

The Visible Church, of which we are now treating, has its being, and its well-being. In its being, it comprehends essentials only; in its well-being, it comprehends, with these essentials, what is requisite to their best condition. Those essentials are; Christ, the Spirit, and the body of members, under the true Gospel and sacraments. This requisite to their best condition is, the "setting of all the members in the body," each in its proper place, the higher and the lower, the ministry and the people; so that there shall be none wanting, and none dislocated; all the parts rightly put together, and all sustaining, helping, and perfecting all, in comfort, growth, and action. This latter is the Visible Church, in its well-being; in its best health, as well as in its essential life.

The distinction here taken between the being and the well-being of the Church, between the Church itself and the ministry of the Church, is all-important. The Visible Church is the whole outward Body of Christ. The ministry is but a service of peculiar members "set in it" for its best health and action. The Church may have this ministry perfect, or im-

perfect; or, so far as the human hand of ordination is concerned, it may, by possibility, have no ministry at all; and, according as it is in one, or another of these conditions, it will realize, more or less perfectly, its true welfare; but, in its worst condition, it will still be, the Church, the Visible Church of Christ in all the earth. This distinction, as we have seen, is vital in settling the question, "What is the true comprehension of the Visible Church?"

But now, as to this ministry of the Church. In its fulness, there are two things about it; its inward gift, and its outward commission. The inward gift is immediately and always from the Spirit to the individual. Its bestowment needs no outward hand; no outward hand conveys it. It is indispensable in constituting the true minister of Christ; nor does it ever fail to reach him, for whom it is sent. It never falls, by chance, on the wrong head. The outward commission is originally from Christ, but mediately through the hands of His first Apostles. Coming thus through human agency, and amid human fallibilities, it is not always accompanied by the inward gift. It does often fall on the wrong head. Still, it is Christ's commission; and though some bear it who ought not, yet none can bear it rightly, but such as bear it lawfully. As it hath been committed to the Apostles' hands, so should it be transmitted according to the Apostles' rule.

At the close of my last discourse, I professed my faith in these points following: that, in transmitting this outward commission, the Apostles, for order's sake and discipline, distributed it over a ministry of three grades; that thus Episcopacy became, every where, from apostolic time, the model of the Christian ministry; that thus, though it be not of the essence of the Church, yet hath it virtually Christ's sanction; and that, therefore, voluntarily and needlessly to abandon it is rashly to incur the hazard of the fearful, perhaps fatal evil of schism. Now, this evil of schism is opposed to the well-being of the Church; and hence, in speaking of this well-being, it becomes desirable to know what is meant by schism. This, then, is the topic on which I am now to enter. Schism: What is it? What are its evils? and how may these evils be cured?

I. What, then, is Schism?

On this point we need clear ideas. Bad as this evil may be, it embarrasses all inquiry to make it worse than it is. Some appear to think that schism cuts off from the Body of Christ, and leaves the exscinded part to die, to perish, as something utterly out of the Church; not, indeed, that every individual, involved in schism, is necessarily left to perish everlastingly; but, that the mass of individuals, thus involved, is actually left to perish ecclesiastically, as something no longer in, or of, the Church. This idea of schism sometimes comes out in print; though generally it is rather the practical inference of unthinking men, from the extravagant colors in which their teachers paint the sin of schism. But, in whatever shape it comes, it is a false idea. Schism separates not from the Church. To see the truth of this, let us look at it. What is the thing itself? In what are we to find its essence?

By inspection of the Scriptures, we shall find that it is not a severance from the unity of the Church, but a disturbance of its union; not a loss of Church essence, but a breach upon Church love.

In the passage now under consideration, the Apostle teaches, "that there should be no schism in the Body." Schism, then, exists in the Body, in the Church; instead of cutting off from the body, and putting forth of the Church: and what this something in the Church is, we learn from what follows: "That there should be no schism in the Body; but that the members should have the same care, one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or, one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it."* Schism, then, is the opposite of this mutual care, this loving sympathy of all the members for and with each other. It is a non-intercourse, a lack of mutual care, a loss of loving sympathy, among the members of the same body. It is, as I said, a disturbance of the Church's union; a breach upon the Church's love. As such, it is in and of the Church itself: and this, perhaps, is one of the saddest of its features. It is in the

* I Cor. xii; 25, et seq.

Church, where all should be harmony. It is among brother-members, whose highest law should be Love!

That this is the true idea of schism, as to the subject in which it exists, may be seen by comparing the passage just explained, with other passages.

1. In some places the Greek word is used in its verbal form. Thus, at the Crucifixion, the vail of the temple is said to have been "rent in twain, from the top to the bottom."* That vail was then in a state of physical schism. It was "rent;" in the idea of the original, it suffered a *schism*. And yet, by that schism, the parts did not, either of them, cease to belong to the one vail. The whole mystic curtain then consisted of its two parts. It was simply a rent, a schismed vail.

2. A similar use of the word occurs in describing the baptismal scene at Jordan. "Coming up from the water," Jesus "saw the heavens opened;" *rent*, like a torn curtain.† And yet, they were but one heavens. The visible schism did not make them two; nor did it put the one side of the rent out of heaven.

3. In other places, we find the word used in its substantive form. Thus, in one of the parables, "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the *rent* is made worse."‡ Literally, "the *schism* is made worse." And yet, at worst, it is but a schism in the garment. It is never a casting away of a part, so that it ceases to be a part of the garment.

4. And so, to come nearer the subject; when, on several occasions, the discourses of Christ had set the Jews at fierce reasoning among themselves, it is said, "there was a division among the people because of Him." "There was a division among them." "There was a division again among the Jews for these sayings."§ Literally, there was, on all these occasions, a *schism* among the Jews; not a cutting off of a portion, so that they ceased to be Jews. Their harmony of opinion was disturbed; and, for the moment, their love cooled under

* Matt. xxvii; 51, et paral. † Mark i; 10. ‡ Matt. ix; 16, et paral.
§ John vii; 43.—ix; 16—x; 19.

hot disputings; but they all remained Jews, notwithstanding their schisms.

5. And finally, to come nearer still; to passages, in which the word means religious schism. St. Paul beseeches his Corinthian "brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that they all speak the same thing; that there be no divisions," literally, "no *schisms*, among them; but that they be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."* "I hear," says he, "that there be divisions," *schisms*, "among you."† Now, here, the meaning of the word is perfectly manifest. The Apostle was addressing a part of the Church which was full of schism, wicked schism, the worst kind of schism; schism right under the eye of an Apostle, and in the young heart itself of the Church. He was rebuking those who had already begun to set up, some for Paul, some for Apollos, some for Cephas, and some for Christ; who were getting up a non-intercourse, and losing their mutual care, and forgetting their loving sympathy, for and with each other, in their unholy jealousy and zeal for building up Paul's party, and Apollos's party, and Peter's party, and even Christ's party, and striving to see which could make their own most popular and most numerous. And yet, he addressed them all as his "brethren," and besought them all, by the dearest of names, that they would heal all their schisms, and live in the oneness of an all-cementing love for the common truth, and for their common Lord. He spoke of their schisms as being "among" them; and not as cutting off Paul's party, or Apollos's party, or Peter's party, from Christ and from His Church, and leaving the part cut off as no longer a portion of the Savior's Body. He treated schism as a thing which was in the Body, which belonged to the Body, and in which every part of the Body was most tenderly concerned. It was a direful evil; and so far as his prayers could go, he would not have it in the Church of Christ.

The question, What is schism? can now be answered. It is a rent, a wound, in the visible Body of our Lord, Christ.

* I Cor. i; 10. † I Cor. xi; 18.

It is a rupture of His Church's harmony, a breach upon His Church's love. It generally arises out of too curious disputes about disputable, perhaps trifling, matters of opinion and judgment. Sometimes it grows out of the heats of personal preferences, or of party ambitions. And it always—perhaps the word may be safely used—always ends in non-intercourse, jealousies, and strifes; the internal dissensions of a family, that ought ever to "live in perfect love and peace together." Such is schism; a melancholy rent; perhaps it were better to say, a sore-festering wound, in the visible Body of Christ. One of its worst characteristics is, that it is in the Body. And yet, this worst reveals its best—that it is not fatal to the Body. Individuals may, peradventure, perish everlastingly for fomenting the evil of schism; but, thanks be to God, their schism itself destroyeth not the visible Body of the Redeemer. Yea, let Christ be glorified, for that these melancholy rents in the vail of His outer temple and in the garment of His visible Body, may, by the deft skill of God's true workmen, be mended so as never more to appear; and that the schismed firmament of His people's peace may be closed, so that nothing shall rend, or pass it again, save, as of old, the dove-like Spirit of God, dropping, silently and every where, as the dew of sweet, all-baptizing love; and that the deep wounds in even His outer flesh may all be healed; till in this outer, as in His inner Church, there shall be nought but soundness; a life in every part, and a helping for each other from all the members. Every passage which we have examined shews that schism is an evil which may be cured; and that, therefore, it is and must be, a fact in the body, and not a severance from the body.

II. If, then, such be schism itself, what are its evils? We may look at these by way of motive to the cure, which is needed, and which, thank God again, is possible.

1. The evils of schism! Who can count, or estimate them? The Body of Christ wounded; yea, "wounded in the house of His friends!" The bond of sacred brotherhood broken; intestine broils, jealousies, divisions, and oppositions; love, starved and dwarfed, and the unloving spirit nursed to a giant;

and all, among a household of members, who have one Gospel, the lively oracles of truth; who hold one Head, Christ Jesus, the Lord; and who hope to be saved by His death from one hell, and to be raised by His life to one heaven! Here is a text for the greatest sermon that man ever preached! And yet, the text itself, perhaps, is greater than any sermon on it that could be preached. Some things seem lessened by all attempts to make their greatness more than self-evident! Look at it, then, and mourn; that broken bond of brotherhood in the family of Jesus!

2. And then, that wound in the Body of Christ! Which of us would love to drag about a wounded, bleeding, almost fainting body? Who could do his day's work well in such a state—lame, weak, tottering? Life-blood is flowing from the Body of Christ. It hath not half its proper strength. It moves feebly and slowly. It doth not well transact Christ's day's work on the world's great harvest-field! It is sad to think on the wounds in this Body of Christ!

3. Besides; schisms feed infidelity. This is specially true in many parts of our land. The mere natural heart loves not to coin, or pay, much money for the Gospel. In a single village, one thousand souls feel but lightly the care of one true minister of Christ; but, if divided and called to care for four, of jarring names, the burthen presses weightily; and the natural heart eases itself by stepping out from under it, and leaving it to press more weightily still on the few who remain. Thus, in time, many natural hearts, who might otherwise have been reconciled and saved, ease themselves, by stepping aside and walking in none of the ways of the Church. Then steps in among them the specious, covert infidel, who preaches for nothing, poisons them with his nothingisms, and finally gathers and bands them into a synagogue of Satan! Behold the source of much of the rampant infidelity of our poor country!

4. Moreover; schisms throw great advantages on the side of errors and all superstitions. Errors thrive while the friends of truth are rent asunder by divisions; and superstitions grow when truth itself is hidden amid the dust of contests. Such is

the present condition of the Christian world. Errors seem to thicken on every hand; and superstition, with its serried ranks ne'er broken, draws thousands from our divided hosts. Men love repose; and, naturally, feel little horror either of religious errors, or of religious darkness. If, therefore, truth shine not clear and calm; if there be always dust, and strife, and separations about it, they indolently seek refuge in notions which are quietly false, or sentimentally shelter themselves under superstitions, which are tranquilly dark. False religion is more agreeable to the natural heart than the true; and if Christians slay not the spirit of their schisms, and consent not to live together in love, and in the heart of their great common truths, nothing but miracles revived can keep victory from the side of error and superstition, or save the Church from being covered once again with the double palls of falsehood and of darkness.

Such is a faint glimpse at the evils of schism. Out of them God doubtless brings some good; perhaps He will yet bring the greatest. Contest and divisions about the truth certainly shew that some minds at least are alive and earnest in their thoughts about it; and this may be supposed to prognosticate truth's final victory. And then, the various divisions in the Church may doubtless be set to watch each other, so that none shall hide, corrupt, or mutilate the Gospel. Moreover, they do oft "provoke one another," if not "to love and good works," at least to zeal and great works. Still, let the wise God make what use of them He please, schisms, in themselves, are unspeakably evil; and by the Bible itself we are taught to seek their cure.

5. But what has all this to do with Episcopacy, or the ministry of the Church? We shall see. If Episcopacy were the model of the ministry, left by apostles in the Church, and at first every where received; and if, having this origin, it have also, as I have shown, Christ's virtual sanction, then voluntarily and needlessly to abandon it, is rashly to throw the Church into hazard of all the evils of schism.

I say not that the mere lack of Episcopacy in the ministry is, in and of itself, or independently of its cause, a schism; but,

that the voluntary and needless abandonment of the Episcopacy endangers, and inevitably produces schism. Such a setting up of new and diverse models of the ministry unavoidably puts as many diverse masses of members upon saying again, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ;" and, out of these contests, it breeds all that I have spoken of as mischievous and full of evil. A loss of the Episcopacy, or even of all ministry, so far as the ministry comes by the hand of human ordination, is not the loss of the Church itself: for the ministry is in the Church, and not the Church in the ministry. But, Episcopacy having apostolic origin, adherence to it, where possible, is not a matter of mere expediency; it is a matter of duty; due to the cause of peace and order, and the Church's rule.

III. But, if such be the evils of schism, and such the way in which they have grown, in part not in whole, from an abandonment of the apostolic model of the ministry; it is of high importance to settle, so far as we may, the question; How may these evils be cured?

In asking this question, I now take these evils and their cause as facts. I go not back to the inquiry; Who made all our schisms? It is enough to know that they have been made by many hands, and with many motives; that a departure from the Episcopacy is but one among a thousand of this evil's springs; that, in many if not most of the schisms which have happened, both sides have been more or less in fault; and that, in some cases, the separation has been justifiable, in so far as it has been forced on the separating party not only as the lesser of two evils, but as the only possible resort, this side a traitorous abandonment of truth, of conscience, and of Christ. It is enough for us to know these things. Our main business is with the facts themselves, and not with their origin. The facts exist: they are evils; and yet, they are curable evils: How may they be cured? This is the only reasonable question now before us.

To this question, then, I reply. They are to be cured, not by attempting to obliterate all the dividing lines, which have

been drawn through the Church; they are probably too deep ever to be obliterated in this world; but by outliving, overcoming, and extinguishing the spirit, in which they were engendered, by which they are cherished, and from which they draw their chief power for mischief. In the view which the Bible gives of schism, as a rent, or wound in the Body of Christ, which is His Church, it is plain that we must cease to regard and speak of non-Episcopal communions as not belonging to the Visible Church. It is not by pronouncing this decision over them, while we ourselves are inquiring after a way of union with Rome, that this deep-seated evil in the Church is to be cured. In the first place, the decision itself, however fond some may be of uttering it, is unfounded, and does but imbitter those whom we ought to win. They are not out of the Church. The very schisms between them and us are in the Church. They are but the wounds in this visible Body of our Redeemer; and the spirit, in which some treat these wounds, does but inflame them the more, or make them bleed the more profusely. And in the next place, the union with Rome, with the idea of which many have become so deeply enamored, does but provoke her derision, so long as we refuse to acknowledge her infallibility and to submit to her supremacy. This whole course, therefore, can but make us hated, or pitied, on the one side; and despised, or ridiculed, on the other. We must quit it, or make the spirit, as well as the name of schism, indelible!

In looking on the visible Body of Christ, all wounded and weakened as it is, some act as if they thought its cure were to be effected by continually thrusting into its wounds the rough and rusty irons of their exclusive and excluding claims. It will not do. It can but aggravate the evil, and bring on all but death. Were I to urge a remedy, it should be this. If these wounds are to be probed at all, let it be with nothing but the Spirit's soft and healing ray of Life: for the rest, let a mollifying preparation of kind offices and peaceful deeds be laid on, to remove all inflammation, and to induce a healing state. Then lay across the wounds the adhesive bands of love,

draw the parts gently but closely together, and leave the inward, healing life of the spirit to perfect the blessed work. Then, the still remaining scar-lines from the name of schism would not be disfiguringly deep; while the poison virulence of schism would all be gone; the Body of Christ, whole and sound again; its many parts and its many members, bound in living union, each helping each, and all made one in perfect, generous, holy sympathy! God send His Spirit from on high to speed this divine recovery of His Church!

In this mode of cure, I recommend no indifference to important and distinctive truths and principles, even though they be not fundamental; no blending of other outward institutions with our own; and no breaking down of our own, by way of showing our respect for others. What I mean is this; that every part of the Church should freely acknowledge that all the other parts belong, as really as itself, to the visible Body of Christ; that each should then fill his providentially appointed lot with peaceful and toilfully active love; and that all, with consenting prayer to God, should seek the residue of the Spirit in its fulness, and labor to "grow up into Christ in all things, which is the Head." This, I believe, is God's way to heal the wounds in His Church; and, in this way, alone, can "the whole Body, fitly joined together and compacted by that, which every joint supplieth, make, in the measure of every single part, an increase of the Body unto the edifying of itself in Love."

This gracious consummation the writer and his reader may never live to see. But it is not a chimera—a thing to be talked of, but not hoped for. It is God's purposed blessing to His Church. It waits to descend; and we may labor, and should seek to hasten, or to realize, its coming down. In doing so, we are drawing in a line with all God's plans and influences, and not at cross-purposes with both His Gospel and His Spirit. In all main, essential truths, all Christians may, as the apostle expresses the idea in a passage already quoted, "speak the same thing, and be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Perfect uniformity of opinion in all things, especially in all things touching outward institutes,

was never intended of God, and can never be enforced, or secured by man. The great, vital sun-truths of the Gospel,—these are the only ones that can be made to shine, in the main, alike on all minds; and it is by feeling the shining of these alone, made quickening by the Holy One, that all Christians can be melted into the oneness of love, and made fruitful in the blessings of peace and truth.

In my next discourse, I hope to close what I have yet to say of this whole subject, so far as it embraces the argument for the true comprehension of the Church.

DISCOURSE X.

"MANY members, yet but one Body."—I COR. xii; 20.

THIS may be considered as one of the most universal definitions of the Church of Christ, whether in its inward and spiritual, or in its outward and visible being. In both aspects, it is "many members, yet but one Body.

In my last discourse, I spoke of schism, as a sad and disturbing fact, existing in the Church. I feel that it would not be right to close the argument on the comprehension of the Church without speaking of Unity also, as a blessed and binding fact, co-existing in the Church. That there is such a thing as the Unity of the Church, none will doubt; for it is involved in the very idea of the Church. Christ, the Head, prayed for it in His last great intercessory prayer on earth; when He asked for His disciples, in all places and through all time, "that they all may be One; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."* And that prayer has never returned into His bosom void. It went up to be answered, not to be denied; and it has been answered, and to the end shall continue un-denied. This unity belongs to the whole subject, which I have been examining; the true comprehension of the Church. In this comprehension, the Church necessarily embraces her own Unity.

But what is this Unity? This is the great question of our age; and it is a question, upon which, as it seems to me, the

* John. xvii; 21.

discussions of the age are bringing darkness rather than light. I pray God for his grace, that some one may bring it, if not into perfect light, at least out of the thick darkness. Whether the present effort, shall contribute towards this latter result, will all depend on the vouchsafement of His heavenly guidance.

Unity, then, may be considered as an attribute both of the Spiritual and of the Visible Church.

1. It is an attribute of the Spiritual Church; of the true and holy Church Catholic, of which I have spoken so much. And this, as I conceive, is, in its highest, fullest sense, the unity for which Christ prayed, on the occasion already referred to. It is that unity, which in the one living Body, the one "Communion of Saints," binds every true believer to Christ, the Divine Head, by the bond of the one, true Scriptural faith; a faith shewing its vitalizing life in one, holy, universal love. This blessed unity has never been broken. It lies above the reach, and therefore beyond the touch, of earth's disturbing causes. In its very essence this unity is indestructible. In the spiritual bond, by which it unites the soul with her Savior, and the Christian to his brother Christian; it is as intangible by the hand of outward events as the soul herself is by the hand of Death! I repeat, it is above the reach of such disturbing causes. It is linked with the life that is "hid with Christ in God." This unity is like the one, deep-starred heaven, above the clouds and storms of earth. Get above these elements, and what do we see? The one great heaven, thick-studded with separate star-worlds; the countless congregation of heaven's radiances, looking down in the blendings of one sweet, noiseless, and most pure brightness upon our dark state: the one, vast, upward Deep, lying calm, silent, moveless, and unbroken above the earth, its clouds, and its storms. The winds, and lightnings, and thunders, and volcanic fires, and earthquake throes, which appal our senses, may, from time to time, agitate the nether surface of that high blue sea; but they have not power to roll up and break that one eternal calm of heaven-light, in which it lies. Great emblem of the unity of Christ's one, holy Catholic Church! Many lights in but

one heaven! "Many members in but one Body!" A sea of life, whose clear depths penetrate upwards unto God; and whose downward surface can never be more than rippled by the mistakes, misunderstandings, and consequent un-harmonies of true Christian brethren!

This unity, because thus spiritual, is not therefore unreal. Every true believer lives in it daily, and daily enjoys its verity. Ask him whether the controversies, agitations, and schisms, which make earth so unquiet, ever break, or touch the bond which binds him to Christ, or the tie which ties him to any known brother in Christ. Ask him, and he will answer,—"Thank God, this is a thing which no hand can reach but God's hand; and which even His hand reaches but to strengthen and to perfect!" Wherever, and to whomsoever, among the great company of the faithful, that question is asked, this will be the answer; and in this answer comes a living demonstration of the truth, that Christ's last, great prayer, went up to be heard, has been heard, and shall be heard ever; "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."

Upon this unity, however, after what has been said touching that holy Church in which it resides, it is not necessary to dwell. The difficulty of this part of the subject lies elsewhere, as we shall see, when we come to my second remark. I observe, then,

2. Unity is an attribute even of the Visible Church. This unity, however, bears but an analogy with that of which I have just spoken. That it exists, I firmly hold. I believe that Christ's prayer has been answered to even His Visible Church. This Church, too, though it consist emphatically of "many members," is yet "but one Body." To see the truth of this, it will be desirable to explain in what this visible unity does not consist; and then, in what it does consist. First, then:

I. In what the Unity of the Visible Church does *not* consist.

1. It does not consist, and was never designed to consist, in the subjection of all the members to one temporal head. The Romanist's plea in favor of the unity, here denied, is but one

great, and baseless assumption. Even if the fiction of St. Peter's primacy, in the College of Apostles, could be converted into a fact, it would make nothing towards the conclusion, that the unity of the Church consists in acknowledging him, or any other human being, as temporal head of the Church. The Church is a Body; and as a body, has but ONE head, in heaven, or on earth; it is not a TWO-headed body. The Apostles have eminence among the members of the Body; but they themselves are in the Church, only because they are "set in that Body," which, as one whole, is all united to its one Head, Christ. Even, therefore, if there were such a thing as a primate among the Apostles, this would not constitute him temporal head of the Church, but only chief of the Apostles. Nor would it make the unity of the Church consist in being united to him; for the members of the body ecclesiastical are no more united to the apostolic eye than they are to the plebeian foot. Its unity consists in this; that it is all one Body, under one Head, Christ. The first Christians, indeed, "continued in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship:" and so must all Christians. To reject the Apostles' "doctrine," is to reject the whole Gospel; and to renounce their "fellowship," is to renounce "the Communion of Saints;" and he, who does either the one or the other of these, is no Christian, and, of course, not in the Church. But, we may "continue in the Apostle's doctrine," and in their "fellowship," too, without acknowledging any one of them, or any alleged successor of that one, as temporal head of the Church, even on the supposition that that one was primate over the rest. But there was no such primate. The Apostles were official equals. The theory, therefore, of a temporal head of the Church, is based on a double fallacy, and the Romanist's idea of unity is a double fiction.

Such a visible unity never has been, and never will be. The theory, on which it is based, is utterly irreconcilable with fact, no less than with argument. The Visible Church of Christ has never acknowledged one temporal head; and it never will. Nearly two thousand years of Christian history have put the realization of the idea among impossibilities.

Such an external unity, it is true, once came near being realized; but, the nearer it came, the more corrupt and dead grew the Church, till, at length, it became a great kingdom of this world, whose manifested life was but intense spiritual death! Could such a unity be ever effected, could Rome's dream be ever made a fact,—a permanent fact over all the earth,—who can doubt that it would virtually give "the god of this world" a life-lease of its kingdoms in Christ's name?

The worst evils, that have ever fallen on the temporal state of the Church, have resulted from Rome's attempts to enforce this external unity, this universal submission to one temporal head. Blood, and fire, and earth-embroiling contests, have certified that the Church was not made for such submission. Even christianized humanity, as the holiest visible hand of God, fights against such a unity, and hath broken its begun fabric in pieces, like a potter's vessel, whereof the sherds cannot be put together.

2. Again: the unity of the Visible Church does not consist in subjection to one universal form of Church government, and ecclesiastical law, as administered by men. The only supreme government in the Church is Christ's; and the only supreme law is His Word. All other government and law are not of the Church's being, but only of her greater or less well-being. They may, therefore, be modified, or changed, without touching the essential unity of the Church. As a nation may have different forms of government in different ages; or different forms, at the same time, over its different parts; and yet be, all the while, but one nation; provided, in the latter case, all the parts acknowledge one supreme authority; so is it in the Church. The central and supreme authority of Christ and His Word preserves its unity, notwithstanding the diversities in the forms of subordinate government, which prevail. Change of government may amount to revolution; and revolution may be fraught with unspeakable evils; but they do not destroy the body, whether secular or ecclesiastical, in which they occur. It remains true, then, that what constitutes the Church one, what makes its unity, is not a universal submission to one form of ecclesiastical government and law.

3. Once more: the unity of the Visible Church does not consist in a universal subordination to one form of the ministry. The ministry itself, as we have seen, is not of the essence, but only of the order and fulness, of the Church; as the eye, ear, and hand are not essential to the being, but only to the completeness and perfectness of the body. The universal prevalence, therefore, of one form of the ministry cannot be that, in which the unity of the Visible Church consists; that, which constitutes this Church one Body. It may be requisite to the harmony, and the best welfare, of this Church; to that state, in which there shall be "no schism in the Body;" but not to the existence of the Body itself. The Body may really be one, though in a very wounded, and a very weakened state. Rejection of what we believe to have been the apostolic model of the Christian ministry may prove the severest wound, which the visible Body of Christ can receive, compatibly with its continuance in life. And yet, that it may be received compatibly with such continuance we see, by what we regard as sad, melancholy experience. The Protestant Reformation, on the Continent of Europe, one of the greatest facts in the Church since the time of Christ, would be an unsolvable enigma on the contrary supposition. By what may be considered an unavoidable necessity, in the order of God's Sovereign Providence, that Reformation resulted in a local loss of the Episcopacy from the ministry. To say that God was concerned, not merely in permitting, but in producing that Reformation; that He produced it by the agencies of old sent down to the earth, by His Spirit and His Word; and that He did it to give a new era to the whole Church by reviving her almost extinct spiritual life, and by giving action to causes, which must finally throw off all error and all superstition from the heritage of Christ; is but to assert what is as plain as that God had an agency in creating the worlds. That Reformation was God's work upon His own Church, and with His own peculiar instrumentalities. And yet, as I have said, it resulted in a local loss of the Episcopacy from the ministry; and it may result in the loss of some portions of Protestantism even from the Church. That is; some portions of Protestantism may yet go

so far, if they have not already, as to reject the whole "doctrine and fellowship" both of the Apostles and of Christ, and thus die off from the Church as a branch sometimes dies and drops from the tree, on which it grew. But, non-Episcopal Protestantism itself, spreading over the wide earth, and carrying with it some of the best life and activities of Christ, His Spirit, and His Truth, is part of the one Visible Church and Body of Christ; and a living proof that the oneness, the unity, of this Church cannot consist in a universal subordination of all the members to one form of the ministry. The loss of the Episcopacy, we consider a great loss; and for what purpose permitted, we cannot yet divine: but to say that it has cast non-Episcopal Protestantism out of the Visible Church, is to be a bold man in charging God, and in overstepping our own highest Standards.

II. In what, then, does the unity of the Visible Church consist? I answer: It consists in professed subjection to Christ, the one Divine Head of this Visible Church. It consists in being thus the One, and universal Body, or company of Christ's professed followers in all the earth. The unity of the Visible Church resides in the outward profession and maintenance, every where, of that which really constitutes the unity of the true, spiritual and holy Church Catholic. The unity of this Spiritual Church consists, as we have seen, in truly having "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism:"—"One Lord," Christ Jesus, as the living Head: "One Faith," the whole revealed Word believed with the heart, as the vital bond which ties every believer to that Head: and "One Baptism," the Baptism of the Holy Ghost, as that which puts the breathing of a divine life into the whole Body so constituted and united. The unity of the true, Spiritual Church consists in really *having* these divine things. The unity of the Visible Church consists in outwardly *professing* them, though, in reality, all the members have them not. This Visible Church is one Body, because it everywhere professes the "one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism," without which there is no Church. Whoever, as an individual, or as a community, utterly casts off this "one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism," is thereby cut off from even the Visible Church: and whoever, individually or collectively,

professes this "one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism," is thereby incorporated into this Church, and there makes a part of the one visible Body of Christ. The Spiritual Church really *has* and enjoys these things, and is thereby one. The Visible Church outwardly *professes* them, and is thereby one, though all its members do not have and enjoy the reality which they profess. The unity of each has reference to the same elementary, constituent principles, without which there can be no Church, spiritual or visible. The unity of the one is divine and perfect; the unity of the other is but analogical and imperfect.

Such, then, being the oneness of the Visible Church, it is obvious that many things may disturb, and deeply wound, its union or harmony, without thereby destroying its unity. This is the difference between unity and union. "The unity and entity of the Church," says Bishop Hall, "can no more be divided than itself." To destroy the unity of the Body is to destroy the Body itself. But the union of the Church may be broken. This is not infrangible. This may be broken without destroying the Body. Unity is that which makes a thing one. Union is that which makes several things agree in one. Union is the harmony of parts. In the Visible Church, it is easy to see how this harmony may be broken, without destroying the Church's oneness. It has been broken, sadly broken—till this Church has become like a family agitated by intestine broils. But, its unity remains. It is still the one, great, visible family of Christ on earth; and, what is more, its union, its harmony, may yet be restored. Perhaps, when we consider the passions and interests of men, and the mixture of all things human in this Visible Church, the wonder ought to be that its discords have not been greater, rather than that they have been so great. And now, to gather up some things from our subject:

1. The view, which has been taken throws light on the question about returning to the unity of the Church. Christians are not to return to visible unity under one temporal head. There is not and never has been any such unity. Nor are they necessarily to return to visible unity under one form of ecclesiastical government and law. Such subordination is

not essential to the real oneness of the Body. Nor, however fervently *we* may pray for it, are they necessarily to return to visible unity under one form of the Christian ministry. Under the providence of God, this subordination may, or may not, be restored. To what, then, are they to return? As we express the idea in our "prayer for all conditions of men," they are to return to "the unity of spirit in the bond of peace." This unity, or rather, this union, must be restored. It is necessary to the welfare of the Church. Without it, piety will remain stinted, and never grow to half its proper stature. Without it, prayer will continue weak, and never grasp on half the promises. Without it, the Church's growth will be partial, and never compass half her destined heritage. The world, in its wants, calls for this return to union; the Church, in her distractions, calls for it: and God, in His Word, calls for it. Ay; and the three shall yet have what they ask. The gracious power of God shall give it to the world, to the Church, and to Himself. The old world's jeers at the Visible Church's broils, are beginning to make Christians sick with sadness; and (is it not God that inspires the faith?) the healing of this sickness will come in the restoration of that sweet harmony, the violation of which is so painfully felt.

The questions, What is the Church? Where is it? How may I find it? are often suffered needlessly to disturb the tender conscience. They are often artfully pressed as though there were a thousand claimants to the character of the Church, and only ONE of them entitled to it; and as though, amid their conflicting claims, each individual Christian must decide which, among them all, is the true Church, the *only* Church, the Church in which *alone* salvation is to be found. This, as we have viewed the subject, is an utterly false position. No soul has such an awful question as this to answer. The comparative claims of different Christian communities are not un-important, but they can never grow to such a fearful weight as this. It is a weight which would press unnumbered souls into despair. The grand direction, needed for every one, is this: Find the Bible, find Christ, find the Holy Spirit, find the Baptism of the heart into the life "hid with Christ in God;" and

then, confessing your Savior before men in the accessible way of His appointment, you have found His Church. His Church covers all Christians.

2. But, the question, What is the true, apostolic ministry of the Church? is one of a different order. We believe this ministry to have been Episcopal. Ignorance, unintentional mistake, education, unavoidable Providences, may render others blameless in living without it; but nothing can make us blameless in renouncing it, save as this ministry itself renounces Christ and His Gospel, or imposes on our consciences terms of communion, which are clearly unscriptural. Whenever this ministry assumes either of these attitudes, the duty of submission to it is lost in the higher duty of fidelity to Christ and His Truth. It is on this ground that our best writers have ever justified the separation of the European Continental Protestants from the Church of Rome, even though in that separation, they were unable to carry with them a Scriptural Episcopacy. The ministry was "set in the Body" for its health and welfare. Subserving these, it must be held. Proving utterly destructive of these, it must be renounced; for the Body, with Christ, its Head, is more than any member thereof, however eminent in place. If even the eye offend incurably, it must be plucked out.

3. The view which has been taken, teaches another thing. While it is our duty, as Protestants, to mourn over the evils which rend the harmony of the Church, and to seek to enter livingly into the sorrows which these evils inspire in the heart of Christ; it is still our privilege to rejoice in the true and holy unity, which pervades and binds all Christ's living members in His one Spiritual Church Catholic; to cultivate, moreover, that "unity of spirit in the bond of peace," which should pervade and unite even His Visible Church; and to live, and labor, and sacrifice, each in his proper sphere, to spread the pure Gospel, the knowledge of the true Savior, over all the world. In this way, we shall do our best in bringing again the full mind of Christ upon all His followers; till, as the light of the sun cometh down, and maketh a shining garment for the earth, so that mind, descending, shall inrobe His

Church, and make even her outer vestments glorious. Already "is the King's Daughter all glorious within." It is a cheering thought that we may aid in bringing forward the time, when her very "clothing shall be of wrought gold;" shining in the sweet harmonies of peace, love, and truth.

4. Finally; let every thing, which has been said, from beginning to end of this whole subject, come to this one point, as an enduring lesson to every single soul: The Church, in her best earthly estate, will save no man. If any man be ever saved, he will, indeed, be saved in the Church, and by the instruments, which Christ has put into her hands for use. Still, the Church alone will not save him; she cannot save him. He must be saved, for himself, individually, by Christ, His Spirit and His Truth; with as much of personal responsibility and watchfulness and care, as if he were alone in the world, with nothing but Christ, His Spirit, and His Truth, beside him. The grand heresy, which the present day is bringing back upon Protestantism, is, that, somewhere in the abstract being of the Church, there is laid up a deposit of spiritual life and grace, which she has power, of her own will, to dispense; and that, to be a member of the Church is, somehow, wittingly or unwittingly, to become a sharer in her rich treasure. It is a fatally perilous delusion. The Church has just so much spiritual life and grace in her, and no more; as each member, for himself alone, draws personally from Christ, through the channels which Christ hath opened. The spiritual life and grace of the Church can never be other or greater than the simple aggregate of what each member thus brings into it, from the great Fountain-head of all. Happy, if every man would remember this truth; if he would carry it with him every where, sleep on it, wake under it, live in it. The Church cannot save us; Jesus Christ must save us; thousands of the members of the Visible Church, it must be feared, have perished; we shall perish, if we never attain to more than reputable membership in this Church.

In dismissing now the argument on the comprehension of the Church, a word personal to the writer may be permitted. He is not, then, indifferent to what may be said whether of himself or

of what he has advanced. Yet, has he not been governed herein by any reference to such notices. He has written, because he felt it his duty to exhibit what he believes to be, at all times, and especially at the present, most important truths. Those to whom it has been his privilege to proclaim the Gospel, will bear him witness, that it is not his wont to dwell, with great frequency, on the special subject of the Church. Ordinarily, "Christ and Him crucified" is and must be his main theme. The present, however, are no ordinary times. Our Church, both in this, and in her mother country, has in her bosom those who are avowedly seeking to put out the light of her Protestantism. Under such circumstances, every minister within her pale is bound to speak out, honestly and fully, and to let his people know where he stands, and towards what he is driving. If they are to be led away from the Protestant faith of their fathers, it is but right that they should be led with their eyes open, and with their own consent. Regardfully of these obligations of the clergy and this right of their people, the author has acted in what he has now, at some length, propounded. To his Master and his conscience, he could not feel justified in withholding what he has written. His children and immediate parishioners, at least, if not the Church at large, must know his whole heart on this subject. The grave charges, usually urged against those who write as he has written, will, perhaps, justify him in the egotism of saying that he is, by conviction, as well as in affection, an Episcopalian. He was born and nurtured in the full discipline of the American Episcopal Church. He loves it, and doubts not he shall love it unto death. But, he humbly hopes that, "by the grace of God," he has a still higher designation. He is a Christian; and, as such, can never sink, in the mere Churchman, the regards, which he owes to all, who belong to Christ. He is also a Protestant Christian; and can never look with other than feelings of unfeigned alarm at every step which our Protestantism may take, in retracing its way, even though it be unconsciously, towards the errors, which were renounced, before heaven and earth, on the morning of the great Reformation. He wages no personal contest. He denies no man the right of forming and spreading his own judgments on the

points discussed. He stands on principle; and, claiming the same rights which he allows, on his own principles he must stand openly. If others can, in the main, stand with him, he will rejoice. But, with many or alone, so he stands; and, with his best prayers and labors for this, our Zion upon earth, will hope so to stand, till called to share the glory of the true Zion in Heaven.

Oh! the glory of that upper Church! To writer and reader, be that the home of our highest, holiest love. Let all live in longings for it; and, to the language of our sweet hymn, let all train the daily utterances of their hearts:

Mother of cities! o'er thy head
Bright peace, with healing wings outspread,
For evermore shall dwell:

Let me, blest seat! my name behold
Among thy citizens enroll'd,
And bid the world farewell!

PART III.

VIEWS

OF

THE GOVERNMENT AND WORSHIP

OF

THE CHURCH.

DISCOURSE XI.

"OBEY them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves."
HEB. xiii; 17.

HAVING finished the argument on the true comprehension of the Church Universal, both in its spiritual and in its visible aspect, I might here close my work. Before doing so, however, I will add a few remarks upon two other topics, which, though they belong not strictly to the comprehension, are yet connected with the general subject, of the Church. We shall be led to one of them by a remark or two on the passage from Heb. xiii; 17.

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." This language refers to ecclesiastical, not to civil rule: for, as the Apostle immediately adds of those, who have this rule, "They watch for your souls as they that must give account." Civil rulers are not appointed to "watch for souls." This office is peculiar to the rulers of the Church.

The language also refers to lawful, constituted rule; and not to authority arbitrarily assumed, or accidentally acquired. Those who "have this rule," have it rightly. It is a rule, which the members of the Church may be called upon to "obey." As we learn, in the first Epistle to the Corinthians; "God hath set some in the Church: first, Apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers.* The institution itself of a Chris-

* I Cor. xii; 28.

tian ministry is divine; more emphatically so than that of civil government. If, in the latter, "the powers that be are ordained of God," more especially so are they in the former.

Again: "the rule," or authority, here mentioned, was not vested in one, but in several. The words are, not, "Obey *him* that hath the rule over you," but "obey *them* that have the rule;" and the plain implication is, that when this was written, there was no one acknowledged temporal head of the Church. Its government was then vested in a body of men, more or less numerous. Thus far, the remarks on this passage admit of no qualification: they imbody unquestionable truths.

But, when we inquire further; whether the authority, here recognized, was vested in an order of ministers of a superior grade, having lower orders of the ministry under them, and governing the Churches under their care, according to Christ's laws; as in an Episcopacy: or was vested in a ministry, constituted on the principle of parity, having no inferior orders, and ruling the Church by their joint counsels; as in Presbyterianism: or was vested in each separate and equal pastor, ruling his own charge independently of other pastors; as in Congregationalism: the passage before us does not decide. It simply decides that there is in the Church a divinely constituted authority, or government; and that this authority is exercised, not by *one*, but by a *plurality* of ministers.

Our claim, as I formerly observed, is, that, "from the Apostles' times," the government of the Church has had its base on the Episcopal platform; and my object in this discourse will be to examine the chief advantages of an Episcopacy in the discipline of the Church of Christ. At the apostolic origin of Episcopacy, as the constitution of the Christian ministry, I have already glanced. I shall not, therefore, resume that topic; and even in treating of the advantages of Episcopacy, as an institution of government in the Church, the bounds which I have set to the present series, will oblige me to limit my examination to the principal only of these advantages.

Before entering on the proposed examination, however, I wish to throw off from the subject certain extraneous matters, by which it would be embarrassed.

Connected, then, with the Christian ministry, as an institution, and originating from some fruitful source, there has doubtless been a tendency to augment its true power, and to diminish the just influence of the popular element in the Church. So, on the contrary, especially since the Reformation, there has been, in connexion with the popular element, and originating in a similar source, a tendency to enlarge its proper sphere of action, and to diminish the just influence of the ministry. What have been termed the usurpations of the priesthood, on the one hand, and what we have seen of popular extravagances, on the other, render illustration of these remarks needless. It is more to my purpose to add that, as to their fruitful source, both the tendencies mentioned have sprung—not out of the Christian ministry itself, nor out of the true genius of a Christian people, but—out of a corrupt human nature, and the circumstances in which it has been placed; and that, under the actual circumstances of the case, those tendencies would have developed themselves, under any form which the ministry could have assumed, and under any type, short of a vastly higher sanctification, into which a Christian people could have been molded.

Again: looking upon Episcopacy as the original constitution of the ministry, the comparatively later power of Popery, on the one hand, has tended to degrade Bishops below their primitive rank of independence and equality with each other; while on the other hand, the popular element, since its developed activity, has tended to annihilate the Episcopal office itself. But, neither with these tendencies has my subject any concern, save, as in the former case, that of ascribing them to their true cause. They are the tendencies of our corrupt nature, under the circumstances, of which history takes note; and not of a Christian ministry, and a Christian people, in themselves considered.

In treating of the advantages of Episcopacy, I must be allowed to mean a pure, or simple Episcopacy. My subject has nothing to do with a Church monarchy, as in Papal Italy; nor with a titled prelacy, as in Protestant England; nor with a corrupt and worldly body of Bishops, as, in various countries,

may have existed; nor with here and there a monster of wickedness, under a mitre; as may, at times, have been seen. These things belong not to Episcopacy itself. They are but historic incidents which, amid the changes of human society, and out of the workings of a depraved nature, have been superadded to Episcopacy. Any form of the Christian ministry, in human hands and in human society, is liable to abuse. Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, in such hands and amid such influences, may be as ambitious, as oppressive, and as corrupt as any other form of the ministry.

Why—the inquiry is pertinent here—why have we heard more of such evils in an Episcopacy, than in any other form the Christian ministry? And the answer is equally pertinent: Because, in all ages since the Apostles, and in all countries throughout Christendom, the Church has, for the most part, been under Bishops as its chief ministers. There has been little but an Episcopacy to meet and endure the deforming and corrupting influences of human society and of historic events. Episcopacy has come down to us through the struggles of the ages among the nations of the earth. It has come down through the disorders which attended the decline of the Roman Empire; through the devastations which accompanied the irruptions of the barbarian hordes; through the superstitions (heathen in origin), which sprang up during mediæval darkness; through the influences which molded it during the Feudal ages, and under the Feudal systems; through the blood, and fires, and fearful excitements of the great Reformation; through the fierce contests, in England, between a political Church establishment and strenuous Puritan dissent; and finally, in our own land, through the hot passions and prejudices, engendered by our severance from foreign rule, as well Ecclesiastical as Political.* Into all these dreadful strifes and changes of the ages and nations of Christendom—springing, as

* As the union of the Church with the State at the conversion of Constantine; the introduction of heathen superstitions into the Christian Body; the power of the Feudal system; and the influence of the Middle Ages generally, tended to corrupt the Ancient Episcopacy; so the terrible excitements of the Reformation, of the Putitan struggle, and of our own American Revolution, have doubtless

they have done, out of the all-controlling movements of the world—Episcopacy has been carried by the resistless current, along which human destiny has been tending. Those strifes and changes mark the steps in the slow but sublime movement of human society towards a higher and more perfect civilization. They have stamped on the character and institutions of men, lines and features, so deep, that centuries have not been able to efface the impressions; and I think it safe to say, that any form of the Christian ministry, coming down, for nearly two thousand years, through the same series of changes and of influences, would have developed evils and abuses, if not identical, at least equal, with those which have been exhibited in the descent of the ancient Episcopacy to our times. Under any other constitution of the ministry, nothing could have prevented the result, but Pentecostal displays of grace, perpetuated from age to age, and making the Church the resistless molder of the world's character, instead of leaving the world to act, in reality, as a potent modifier of the character of the Church; and with such displays of grace (had God seen it wise to vouchsafe them), the ancient Episcopacy itself would have come down unabused and unharmed; and the outcry from the mouth of the world, and the record from the pen of history, against the abuses, to which it has been subject, would have been unheard and unwritten. From the close of the second, to that of the eighteenth century, Episcopacy has been subjected to the severest of tests and carried through the most pernicious of influences. During the reign of those long ages it was never, as a whole, in a position favorable to the development of its true character, and the exertion of its true power, uncorrupted and unfettered.*

tended to confirm those corruptions; on the principle, that what is fiercely and bloodily assailed, seeks, as men are naturally constituted, to defend and preserve itself; and thereby takes the deeper root in the soil, from which its eradication is sought.

* The remarks of Scott, on the abuses of civil government in England, apply, with equal force, to those of Ecclesiastical government in all countries:—

"In our happy land," says he, "the advantages derived from civil government, are immense; our grievances comparatively minute, and often imaginary; and *rather the fault of human nature*, than of our constitution or public adminis-

We must, therefore, set aside from the subject all the considerations to which I have adverted, and look at Episcopacy in its own proper character, as a constitution of the Christian ministry on the basis of an imparity of orders, and securing to the highest of those orders the chief, though not the sole, place of rule, or authority, in the Church. We must look at Episcopacy such as it ought to be; such as it was designed to be; and such as, in various times and places, it has been, humble and holy; world-renouncing and laborious; and amid all, ruling the Church according to Christ's laws. I say, "according to Christ's laws;" for though the Church has power to make other regulations for the outward order of worship, for the transaction of business, and for the management of temporalities, provided these regulations are harmonious, or not inconsistent, with the Scriptures; yet, any government, whether in Episcopal or other hands, which attempts to rule the Church, in spiritual matters, on the basis of any other laws than those, which Christ has left, is a usurpation, a tyranny, unlawful in the sight of God. I repeat, then, we must look at Episcopacy as it ought to be, as it was designed to be, and as it often has been; imbued with the mind of Christ, and ruling the Church according to the laws of Christ. Instances of such an Episcopacy have been, both in individuals and in Communities; and it is but right to look at a thing in itself, and not at the abuses, of which it has incidentally been the subject. It may be laid down as a maxim, that, when they fall into wicked hands, the best things have the worst abuses. Hence, that best of rules, of "doing all things to the glory of God," has been practically abused to sanctify the most dreadful enormities, even to the blood and fires, the racks and brain-destroying tortures of the Inquisition!

And now, to enter directly on the subject proposed: the

tration. For speculators on this subject (even such as profess to believe the doctrine of man's entire depravity) almost universally blame this or the other form of government for those evils, which are in fact *inseparable from fallen nature*: and they expect that benefit from the change of forms or persons, which can only be produced by the renovation of men's hearts to the holy image of God, and the mortification of that *inordinate self-love* and *idolatrous love of the world*, which are *universal to mankind*."—[Com. on Rom. xiii; 1—7.]

two main functions of the Christian ministry are, to govern the Church by the discipline of ORDER, and to rule it by the discipline of TRUTH: in other words, scriptural government, and scriptural teaching. When these two things are adequately secured, the Church is in its best earthly state.

1. Let us, then, in the first place look at Episcopacy as a GOVERNMENT; a discipline of ORDER.

Government is a necessary function of the Church universal. Though no one form, or constitution of government can be used as a mark, by which to ascertain the comprehension of the Church, yet, in its visibility, no part of the Church has ever been without some such form or constitution. The very fact of an ecclesiastical organization implies the existence, and rests on the necessity, of a government in the Church.

The main advantage of a simple Episcopacy, in governing the Church, becomes manifest in its *centralizing*, *uniting* tendency. A Bishop, in his true character, appears—not as a mere man in the ministry, who by peculiar personal qualities, or by accidental circumstances, has acquired superior influence, and is thus, perhaps, an object of jealousy, or envy; but—as the regularly constituted, and cheerfully acknowledged head of the clergy and people under his care. He is—(and in our own country, he is by their own choice),—in an office, which they regard as having come down from the Apostles; and around which, therefore, cluster all their sentiments of filial reverence, and deferential regard. Their submission to his lawful rule is cordial; free, so far as our earthly lot will admit, from the human feelings of jealousy and envy. In this character, the Episcopacy tends,—not to degrade the lower orders of the ministry,—they are its main helps in its labors for Christ; nor to depress the just influence of the popular element in the Church—on that it depends for concurrence and efficiency in those same labors;—but, simply to act as a uniting centre to both the clergy and the people; enforcing the rules of law and administering the discipline of government, paternally and wisely; allaying dissensions and composing strifes, with the best prospect of cheerful acquiescence from both sides, and of keeping the whole body from the extremes of

clerical encroachment on the one hand, and of popular excess on the other. The best interests, as well as the high duty, of such an Episcopacy lie in the harmony, peace and love of the whole body of clergy and people under its care. Ambitions, usurpations, stretches of power, are possible evils: but they are possible under all systems in the hands of human nature; and would be as possible in a democracy of the *Church*, as they are found actually to be in a democracy of the *State*. They are the evils of our nature; and no system can be kept entirely safe from their entrance. A simple, primitive Episcopacy is, doubtless, as safe from them as any other system, committed to the guardianship of men; while its power to promote harmony, peace and love, in obedience to venerable and constituted "rule," is manifold greater than that of any other, which can be named.

Perhaps it will be objected, that the testimony of history is against this view; and that, as it is often charged, the ancient Episcopacy *naturally* developed itself into the comparatively modern Papacy.

To me this charge seems unsupported. What,—let me ask,—first transformed the simple, primitive Bishop into an Arch-bishop; the Arch-bishop into a Patriarch, and finally the Patriarch into a Pope? Not, as I apprehend, the inherent tendency of the ancient Episcopacy itself; but the adventitious circumstances, with which it became needlessly implicated. It is inconsistent with my plan to enter at large into the history of that development; but, I think it would be easy to demonstrate, from written facts, the following positions.

The development of the Papacy commenced in the worldly and political influences, which were early introduced; especially at the conjunction between the Church and the State, consequent on the accession of Constantine the Great to the throne, and upon his real, or pretended conversion to Christianity. He adopted Christianity, as the religion of his still, in the main, unconverted Empire; and sought to make himself to religion in the State, what the Bishop was to religion in the Church. That political conjunction was the great misfortune of the Christian ages. Yet, it was a misfortune in-

curred, not by the inherent tendency of the ancient Episcopacy, but, by the false views of an Emperor, but recently disenthralled from his dark bondage under heathenism. Thenceforward, and as long ages rolled by, the political influences of the State, identical then with those of the Church, working in all the great and influential cities of Christendom, and taking advantage of the superstitions engendered of darkness, rapidly favored the corruption of the ancient and simple Episcopacy; and expedited the passage of the, once laborious and suffering, holy and unambitious Bishop along his career, from one grade and title to another, and from one degree of political power to a higher; till finally, an office, which was at first held by a humble laborer and sufferer for Christ, came to be filled by a triple-crowned MONARCH of the Church, to whom even Emperors were fain to pay homage.

That the superstitions of the Church, to which I just now adverted, were contracted from the lingering and scarcely latent heathenism of the Roman Empire, while becoming, and after it became, nominally Christian; it will not, I suppose, be by Protestants denied; and, that it was through these superstitions mainly, that the simple Episcopacy of elder times became gradually corrupted, and the Bishop of Rome finally able to enforce his claim to universal jurisdiction; this is a truth as little likely, in such a quarter, to be questioned. It was under favor of those growing superstitions that the ambitious prelates of that powerful and wealthy city were able to stretch prerogative after prerogative; to secure from weaker prelates concession after concession; and to take, by the side of temporal princes, step after step, till at last the fortunate successor reached the summit, at which his predecessors had been aiming, and sate,—PONTIFEX MAXIMUS,—acknowledged temporal and spiritual head of the Christian world!

The decay of intelligent and scriptural piety, consequent on those growing superstitions, must be named as the true secret of his success. Had the spirit of that piety continued to live, as in the first ages, it would have been impossible either to corrupt the ancient Episcopacy, or to place the foot of a Roman Bishop on the subject neck of Christendom. As a strong cor-

roboration of this position, it may be remarked; that, so soon as the spirit of that piety, intelligent and scriptural, not superstitious and ascetic, began to revive at the dawning and the sunrise of the Reformation, the prerogatives and usurpations of the Pope began to be questioned; that ultimately his iron yoke was broken off through all Protestant realms; and that, in England, where the Reformation was conducted with closest reference to the primitive estate of the Church, primitive Episcopacy at once came forward, if not wholly in its proper character, at least to its proper post, and with but few variations from its original; abounding once more in wondrous laborers for Christ, and in wondrous martyrs for his Truth. The strength of the remark is still further increased by this consideration; that nothing *higher* than Episcopacy was, or could be, retained in even the *royally*-favored Protestantism of England. Had the attempt been made, while reforming the Church of her doctrinal errors and corruptions in ceremony, to retain even the most modified allegiance, or subordination, to the Papacy in government, there can be no reasonable doubt that the religious feeling, which then awoke and lived in the light of the Bible and the Spirit, would have been roused to the extreme of resistance, and have swept away, not only the Papacy, but all traces of the Episcopacy itself. The Episcopacy of England was the highest point, which the waters of that purifying flood could have left standing: so resistlessly does an enlightened and scriptural piety set against every form and modification of the Papal system.

Moreover, with all the political and superstitious influences, and with all the amazing power of wealth, which I have mentioned, and with which his mighty metropolis surrounded him, the Bishop of Rome did not succeed in fixing himself on that splendid pinnacle of his ambition, till after ages of desperate conflict with other Bishops of Christendom in their resistance to his unchristian claims. And even when he did finally succeed, in despite of such resistance, it was not because he was BISHOP, but because his see was ROME; the metropolis of the world; the central heart of the power and wealth, and civil influence of a fatally corrupted empire. The idea, that an-

cient Bishops, prompted by the inherent tendency of their office, conspired, either openly or secretly, either consciously or unconsciously, to lift, or be the instruments of lifting, one of their *own official equals*, step by step, and age after age, to a throne and the tiara, is, to my mind, the wildest of chimeras. They struggled long and intensely against the strides of a mammoth power, in which Christian office had become blended with a strange concentration of all the baleful influences of this world. Suppose the Bishop of Rome had been but a Presbyter among Presbyters, with no Bishops on Earth; yet, by virtue of his peculiar position, a kind of successional moderator over brethren; a hereditary "*primus inter pares*," or first among equals; I hold that the mighty influences of the ages through which his office must have passed down, would inevitably have made him a Pope, if not in name, yet in fact and in effect. The truth is, in their real, spiritual independence as official equals, Bishops are and ever have been, the most strenuous opponents of Popery; and if they, with all the authority and influence of their ancient and venerated office, were unable to resist the strides of the politico-ecclesiastical giant in Rome, what could a less influential band of Church officers have done in their struggle with that evil genius of Christendom? No: this tendency to an augmentation of power, sprang not out of the ancient Episcopacy itself. Had the Church never been married to the State; had political and pecuniary influence, favored by the superstitions of darkness, never submerged that simple and primitive institute beneath their corruptions, the Papacy had never existed. Most of all things, and with the best of reasons, the Pope fears a spiritual, independent Episcopacy, filled with official equals. Hence it is, that even that partial approach to such an Episcopacy, which is exhibited in the restored English Church, has ever been an object of State jealousy to the Church monarch at Rome. Were there no such Episcopacy in the world, Rome, I fear, would reign in comparative quiet and freedom from solicitude; and her hope would sensibly brighten of once more wielding the sceptre of a universal temporal dominion.

I think, then, I am safe in saying that Episcopacy did not,

originally and from its own inherent tendency, develope itself into Popery; and that it is not now, from itself, tending back to that extreme. I think we have said and seen enough, to make us receive, with strong confidence, the conclusions; that unsanctified human nature, under all circumstances, and particularly under such as history records, does tend, violently, to the Papal corruption; that political influence, when married into the Church, tends forcibly to the same result; and that superstition and doctrinal error,* as we see with our own saddened eyes, may run, with unmatched velocity along the beaten track, both of our straying nature, and of a mere baptized political ambition; but, that simple, primitive Episcopacy itself is not plagued with this tendency more than any other pious and exemplary Christian ministry. In ruling the Church I consider such an Episcopacy the happiest mean, ever yet presented, between the Papal tyranny, on the one hand, and popular misrule, on the other. In its very nature, it has just the character, which fits it for such a central and centralizing position. Popery accumulates and absorbs power into itself; the unrestrained popular element disperses and destroys it; a simple Episcopacy, while it represses both extremes, binds together the Body of Christ's members in as much of harmony, peace, and love as are compatible with the lot of Christ's religion in the hands of our common humanity. Our nature, both in individuals and in society, tends to extremes; and when, with an enlarged and enlightened view, we look upon the ruinous character of the extremes, into which, on either hand, it has actually run. I think it must be evident, to all judicious minds, that the Church needs just such a centralizing influence in its ruling authority, as that, which was exhibited in the ancient Episcopacy, before blind worldly policy, aided by the baptized superstitions of Heathenism, gathered around it the trappings of earthly power, and place, and wealth; and while, like its Master, and from simple love to Him and to the souls of men, it was willing to walk on its rounds of labor, and

* Instances under this head it would be superfluous to cite, amid the publicity as well as frequency, to which, in our day, they have attained.

to be, in temporal things, more unprovided than the foxes in their holes, or the birds of the air in their nests. God hasten the day, when the spirit of the ancient institute shall return, not only in here and there a humble, holy Bishop; but in all, who bear his office; and when, under their wise and paternal sway, the Church shall be ruled in harmony, peace, and love, according to the simple laws of Christ, and in all the prosperousness of spiritual life and growth.

2. After this rapid glance, let us now look at the second main point in our subject; at Episcopacy as A TEACHING INSTITUTE, or as ruling the Church by THE DISCIPLINE OF TRUTH; at the influence of Bishops in doctrine, preaching, and example, on the body of the clergy, and of the people. This is the most important post of influence, which the Christian ministry can fill. It is Christ's chief instrumentality for the salvation of lost men.

In his true character, then, as humble and holy, laborious and Christ-like, a teaching Bishop comes in contact with all classes in the Church, the old and the young, the clergy and the people, under the most favorable circumstances; not merely as a good man in the ministry, but as such a man, clothed with the authority, and surrounded by the reverence, which attach themselves to his ancient and peculiar office; the recognized and venerated teacher, not of a few, but of the whole flock committed to his care; the grave and honored expounder of the doctrine of Christ to the more or less widely spread clergy and people of his charge. It is true, even a Bishop may teach *error* and exemplify *wickedness:* and so, with even greater facility, may any other ministry.* This, therefore, unfavorably affects not our view. Take two preachers of the Gospel,—equally learned and able, equally holy and exemplary; in all essential respects alike, save that the one is a

* The comparatively small number of Bishops in a Church, and the greater publicity of their teachings and manner of life, keep them more strictly in the eye of public scrutiny, and render it more easy to compare their doctrine and conduct with the standards of truth and duty, than can be the case with a more numerous body of clergy, each of whom is ordinarily confined within the limits of a narrower and more private sphere.

Bishop, and the other merely an influential minister among non-Episcopalians: it will, I apprehend, be impossible so to extend and diversify the Christian labors and influence of the latter, as to render them equal in power and efficiency on the spiritual welfare of the flock of Christ, with the similarly extended labors, and the peculiarly diversified influence of the former. He has not the same point of advantage, from which to act. He carries not with him, in the peculiar genius of his office, the same silent, but living and deep-felt power for good. This comparison is not intended to depreciate the blessed power of the able and holy man of God, in the office of such a minister; but to show that it is simply impossible to clothe him with all the means for good, which invest the equally holy and able man of God in the office of a Bishop. In his doctrine and in his teaching; in his example and in his active measures for the extension of true religion, there is a peculiarity of influence about such a Bishop, to which no other minister of Christ can attain. It is, of course, a peculiarity, which grows, not out of the *man*, but out of his *office*, and out of the adaptedness, in which that office meets certain great and permanent susceptibilities in our common nature. Say what we will, we cannot take out of our nature the salutary feelings of deference and respect, with which it stands in the presence of *just* and *fitting*, and *rightly* constituted superiority of official rank; a superiority of rank, not so high as to inspire awe, and a painful sense of distance; nor yet depressed so nearly to the common grade, or to the idea of a mere gift from the people, as to breed familiarity, or generate contempt. In spite of theories, our nature dreads the monotony of an unbroken level. A beautiful and harmonious ascent of being and of orders marks all God's works in heaven and on earth; and it is impossible to extinguish the feelings, which spontaneously spring up in the manifested presence of this divine constitution of things. A pure Gospel, and the religion, which it imbodies, spread to the best advantage from such a Bishop as I have described. He has the best opportunities for impressing the holy character of Christ and His Gospel upon wide masses of men, and upon all the living institutes and permanencies of the Church. The

point of influence, from which he acts, gives him the best means of "driving away from the Church all erroneous and strange doctrines, contrary to God's Word." He is not so far off from his clergy and people but that he can see and measure *error* and its *evils* with his own eyes, and remove them by such means as are wisest and best; nor yet, so nearly on an equality with them in conceded authority and influence as to strip his discipline of its just power for effect. He is, I venture to affirm, the happiest instrumentality for religious good, which the Church has ever known, or the world ever felt. He concentrates confidence, veneration, love; he awakens respect, reverence, obedience; he promotes harmony, zeal, action; and he does all with a peculiarity of success to which, as I venture to suppose, no one, under other forms of the ministry, can attain; to which no one in the lower orders of an Episcopally constituted ministry itself can attain; which springs from the fact that there *are* lower orders in this ministry; and which, in truth, is partly but the power of these lower orders working upwards, and becoming manifest in the results of this benignly effective Presidency.

The main objection to this view, will, I suppose, be found in the allegation, that the office of a Bishop has too much power, too strong attractions for the mere worldly heart in its love of authority and of official consideration; and that, therefore, Bishops are more liable to become worldly in spirit and corrupt in doctrine, and consequently baleful in their influence on the cause of spiritual religion, than a ministry constituted on the basis of official parity. If the Episcopal office were indeed and intrinsically identified with the pomp and circumstance, the wealth and political power, which, in some countries, have been associated with it, there would be weight in the objection. But such is not the case. These corrupting influences belong not to the office itself, so much as to the circumstances with which worldly influence has surrounded the office. The love of power is innate, ineradicable, and, unless under the control of divine grace, inordinate. To the human heart office is nothing, but as it is a means for acquiring, or an

instrument for exercising, the power which it loves. And even as such a means, or instrument, it is, perhaps, of less importance than many suppose. The main sources of power lie *within* a man; and when the spring is deep and copious, if it do not *find*, it will soon *force* a channel for its gushings. When the love of power is strong, if it do not *meet*, it will easily *make*, an office, into which it may vault and ride on high among the people. And when human ambition *makes* an office for *itself*, it is somewhat apt to make it higher than God, in his wisdom, has seen fit to ordain.* So far, then, as the *theory* of the Episcopal office is concerned, it may, perhaps, be said that where no due gradation in the ministry is established and conceded, the ambitions which live deep in our nature, and the consequent difficulty of maintaining simple equality among masses of men of varying abilities and susceptibilities, will be more likely to engender strifes after superiority of place and power, than where such a gradation in the ministry *is* established and conceded, and where the very fixedness of institutions tends, so far as any thing can tend, to generate a spirit of quiet submission and contentment of mind under the reign of lawful and acknowledged order.

The best illustration both of the theory and of the working of true Episcopacy may, perhaps, be gathered from the earliest ages of the Church. What, then, was a Bishop designed to be? What was he in the pristine days of his office? I answer, the most conspicuous follower of Christ, as well in poverty and sufferings as in the aboundings of his toils for the souls of men; the very front mark in the Christian army to the arrow of the destroyer and the sword of the persecutor. "Nolo Episcopari," "I desire not to be a Bishop," was then the utterance, not of a counterfeit or a false modesty, but of a human heart, speaking out of its deepest sensibilities, and

* I am willing that this should be applied to the causes, which set in the Church Arch-bishops, Patriarchs, and Popes. These, as I have shewn, are not naturally developed Episcopacy; they are man's aspirings, vaulting above primitive Order: and, had that Order been Presbyterial, the leap upwards would have been quite as possible, and but little higher.

meaning that, "if the Master would mercifully excuse his servant, he would prefer laboring in less observed and less perilous posts of duty." The Episcopal office was not sought by the worldly or the ambitious *then;* it could not be urged on any but those who were constrained, by love for Christ and for the souls of men, to "count all things but loss," and to be counted as but the "offscouring of all things." *Then* the influence of the office was not corrupting but purifying. It drew, into that front ministry, none but the choicest of the fine gold; and it drew that gold thither but to refine it still more perfectly, as in a furnace of fire! Those days will never return; but the time may come—God send it soon—when the office of a Bishop shall have nothing—(in our own country it *now* has *little* indeed)—to attract the heart, but superior opportunities of doing good in the salvation of men, amid more abounding toils, privations and hardships, endured from love to the dear Savior of our souls, and to those for whom He so freely shed His own precious blood. The idea, wherever it prevails, that the dignity of this office must be maintained by surrounding it with the adventitious array of wealth and titles, seems like an imputation on the lowly Jesus, and to be born of a mere earthly conception of the dignity in view; as if the work of Christ and the office of His chief ambassador did not shine brightest and most heavenly when seen, like the stars, *at night;* surrounded, if need be, by the darkness of poverty, and of a wicked world's frown! True Bishops need not court either poverty or persecution; neither should they ignobly shun them; and, least of all, should they covet equality with the great of this world in the external circumstances of wealth and power.—Their influence will be most extended and most benign, when, in character and labors, they are most like Christ; and when they partake most largely in the spirit of him who "rejoiced in his sufferings for the brethren, and in filling up what was behind of the afflictions of Christ, for His Body's sake, which is the Church."*

* Col. i; 24.

Such, then, is the Episcopacy which I advocate, separated from what belongs not to it, save in common with other systems; from what springs out of corrupt nature itself, and out of the unfriendly circumstances of which history takes note. It is as proper to limit our views to *such* an Episcopacy, as, in estimating the value of other forms of the ministry, to suppose those who fill them to be good men. In estimating the value of any particular constitution of the ministry, no one would go on the supposition that its incumbents were *bad* men, or even needlessly embarrassed with obstructions hostile to their proper usefulness. Let it be recalled to mind that other constitutions of the ministry, as well as Episcopacy, are liable to dangerous corruptions and abuses; and that, if any one of them had descended to our times through as long and as adverse a period as that through which Episcopacy has come down, it would, doubtless, have developed evils, if not the same, at least as great, as those which have clustered round this same Episcopacy itself. We have viewed this institution as it ought to be; as it was in its pristine age; as it has been since in unnumbered glorious instances; as it now is in multitudes of instances scarcely less glorious; and, as we firmly believe it will be every where, when the abuses of the ages, already so inconsiderable among ourselves, shall *all* be swept away; and when the perpetuated and venerated blessings of the Episcopacy of elder times shall be seen opening the rich stores with which it has come freighted downwards to our day, and pouring them into the lap of a thankful Church, and upon the head of a once unthankful world.

Is not Episcopacy, then, thus viewed, pre-eminently good in both its offices, that of ruling the Church by the discipline of ORDER, and that of molding Christians by the discipline of TRUTH; of ruling the Church on the middle ground between the two extremes of PAPAL TYRANNY and of POPULAR MISRULE; and of disciplining Christians in the doctrines of life, both by driving out HURTFUL AND STRANGE ERROR, and by giving its most benign and powerful action to SAVING, HEAVENLY TRUTH? We have necessarily taken but a very partial survey of a great

subject, but we have, I think, seen enough to commend the institution which we have examined to every sound and judicious, to every serious and spiritual mind. We, at least, shall never cast away what we believe to be apostolic in its origin, merely because a wicked world has abused it in its descent; but, clinging to it for its own sake, and for the sake of its founders, will labor to save it yet for a jarring earth, as one among the richest and most conservative of benefits from Heaven.

DISCOURSE XII.

"THE true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth."—JOHN iv; 23.

AFTER concluding the argument upon the true comprehension of the Church Universal, I proposed to touch upon two other topics, which, though not strictly belonging to the comprehension, are, nevertheless, connected with the general subject, of the Church. To one of these topics I was led by some remarks on a passage from Heb. xiii; 17. I shall be led to the other by some observations on a passage in John iv; 23.—"The true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth."

These words of Christ to the woman of Samaria exhibit the character of the true worshiper of God in all places and in all ages.

Worship, in its outward manifestations, like government in its varying forms, has every where and always been a function of the Church Universal. Though no one *form* of worship can be used as a mark, by which to ascertain the true comprehension of the Church, yet no part of the Visible Church has ever been without worship in *some* form. It may, perhaps, be said with truth, that the Church is essentially a WORSHIPING BODY.

The requisites to all acceptable worship are stated with admirable precision by Him who "spake as never man spoke." Such worship must ever be "in *Spirit* and in *Truth*." It must

be "in Spirit," as consisting, not merely in outward form and ceremony, not merely in external offerings and sacrifices; but also in an inward and spiritual act, in an earnest engagement of mind and heart, in the strong, spiritual exercises of the soul itself. It must also be "in Truth," as well as "in Spirit:" in Truth, as involving sincerity, and as opposed to hypocrisy, and to all mistaken or artificial excitement of the mind and feelings; in Truth, as being really aided by the Holy Spirit of Truth, and essentially based on right views of the true God, and of the truths which He has revealed. All, who worship God "in Spirit and in Truth," as these terms have now been explained, are accepted of him; and none others can be. He "seeketh such to worship Him," and with none but such can He be pleased. All outward forms of worship, when vacated of this Spirit and this Truth, are but as a smoke in His nostrils, an offence to His eye, and an insult to His ear. He "is a Spirit," and, as, such, looketh right through all outward acts and forms, and sees whether they are filled with what is, like Himself, Spirit and Truth; or whether, harmonizing with the character of the hypocrite, the formalist, or the visionary, they are but the empty mockery of the knee, the lip, and the eye, or as the glare of a false fire.

From this, however, it must not be inferred that the forms, in which worship is offered, are, in themselves, matters of no importance. The true, silent worship of the soul is a sublime offering, and goes up to God as an "incense of a sweet smelling savor." But, in the action of the Visible Church, it can never take the place of a worship, expressing itself in some appropriate outward form. It is, therefore, an inquiry of much interest, in what form this worship may best be offered? In proposing this inquiry, let me be understood as speaking of the worship, not of the closet, nor of the family, nor of the voluntary social circle, but of the CHURCH in its public, stated, ordained services. In what form, then, may *this* worship be most advantageously offered? Unless we adopt the theory of a silent worship, some form the Church must necessarily have. Is that form, then, the best, which, by proper ecclesiastical authority, has been PREVIOUSLY SETTLED AND ENJOINED, or that,

which, so far as its incidental clothing of words is concerned, may be called EXTEMPORANEOUS?

I put the question in this shape, because I am free to confess that the Bible does not, by explicit, or binding precept, settle any thing as to the form in which the worship of the Church *must* be offered. The absence of binding scriptural authority, for any one form of public worship, is so manifest, that the American, following herein the English, Preface to the Book of Common Prayer, has laid it down as the ground of one of its rules; that "the particular forms of Divine Worship are things, in their own nature, indifferent and alterable, and so acknowledged." As any individual, family, or social circle is at liberty to worship either with or without a previously settled form, so, any organized Visible Church has the same liberty when engaged in settling this question for itself. It may adopt either the one form or the other; and having done so, it may change the one for the other, provided, that, in such change, it act, as our Preface expresses the provision, "by common consent and authority."

It is needless to say that OUR branch of the Church Universal, following, in this respect, general custom, has enjoined worship by a form previously settled and enjoined; and that, until "by common consent and authority," this form be altered or abolished, it is not admissible for us, as a Church, to worship in any other way than that prescribed.

It is almost as needless to say, that worship by such a previously settled form may be offered, as God requires, "IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH." No spiritually enlightened and really candid mind will deny or doubt the truth of this remark. The facts that the worship both of the Temple and of the Synagogue was by such a form, and that the holy Jesus was in the habit of joining it in both places, forever settle this point; and should put the seal of silence on the lip of every one who objects that worship by such a form is opposed, or unfriendly, to worship "in Spirit and in Truth." Either such a form is congruous with these interior requisites; or Christ has sanctioned by His example what, by His words, He has condemned.

These points, then, thus briefly disposed of, it is my purpose

in this discourse, to treat of what I regard as a chief advantage of an authorized and enjoined form in the public, stated worship of the Church.

In doing this, it is not necessary to sympathize—I acknowledge that I do not sympathize—in many of the common strictures passed upon worship in an extemporaneous form. We may think and admit—for myself I freely confess to such thoughts and admissions—that, following simple nature taught and aided by the Holy Spirit, the heart is strongly inclined to pour forth its emotions and desires, its faith and its love, into the bosom and upon the ear of God, in the unstudied language of gushing earnestness and affection; and that worship thus offered, whether in secret or in public, is highly acceptable to Him "that looketh on the heart." We may take this view and make these admissions without touching the real merits of the question, whether, in the public, stated worship of the Church, the advantages of a previously settled and enjoined mode preponderate over those of an extemporaneous form. This question must be settled, not by reference to what simple nature, influenced by divine grace, would prompt the heart to do *by itself*, but by a reference to what is demanded by the complex and, in its simplest form, artificial, structure of the Church; by the involved and multiform interests and influences of its social organization.

In examining this point, the view generally taken, as in the treatise of the philosophic Dr. Paley, virtually supposes the mind of the Church to be, in the main, at rest: that is, in a state of religious repose, which renders it a fit subject for the just development of the comparative excellences of the two forms of worship. And if the mind of the Church could always be kept in such a state, this would be the true light in which to view the subject. But the mind of the Church is not always, nor generally, in such a state. From within itself and from without, it is often excited, put in motion, and driven, if not into progress, at least towards change. In these states of mind, too, it frequently happens, so far as the mass of individuals is affected, that theological views are shifting, doctrines are in transition, faith is unsettled, and customs are upheaved.

These, therefore, would seem to be the periods, most proper for testing the comparative value of the two forms of public worship in the Church. I shall look at the subject with special reference to such a state of things. Such a state now exists; has long existed; and has affected, not one part alone, but the whole, of Protestant Christendom. It may be added, that, except when its spiritual life has either become stagnant amid the corruptions of error, superstition, and worldliness; or been raised to a point of purity and power seldom, if ever, realized on earth; the Church is never wholly free from the influence of such a state in the agitations and tendencies of what may be termed its general mind.

In approaching now, the point of comparison before us, it is necessary that we obtain a previous, distinct view of what, in all public worship, is the TRUE ATTITUDE OF THE REALLY DEVOTIONAL MIND.

What is this attitude? I reply: The really devotional mind, engaged in public worship, is, not in the *intellectually critical*, but, in what, for the sake of graphic brevity, I would denominate the *amen-saying* state. In other words, such a mind is not in a frame which inclines it to pause; to question every utterance of him who leads its devotions; to compare every such utterance with the standard of truth; and so to judge whether or not it cover a heresy: but, it is in a frame which inclines it to repose, with sweet confidence, on the soundness of its leader; to catch his utterances as they flow warm from his heart and his lip; and, with a constant and impulsive, though silent, "*amen*," to speed them upwards to the Throne on the swelling importunity of a people's prayer. This is the true attitude of the really devotional mind in all public worship. Any other attitude is unfitting the occasion. It is but turning worship into an exercise, and a training, of the mere *critical intellect*. I say, not merely that such *should be*, but that such *is*, the true attitude of the really devotional mind. It is the attitude which such a mind actually seeks and maintains. When it changes this attitude for some other, it ceases to be a *devotional*, and becomes a *critical*, *speculative*, or *discursive* mind, or a mind in some other attitude equally foreign from the true spirit of public worship.

I. As acting, then, on this true attitude of a really devotional spirit, let us look, in the first place, at the tendency of an EXTEMPORANEOUS mode of public worship, during such a period of movement in the mind of the Church as that, which we have contemplated.

A deep, perhaps a still and, by the mass, unnoticed current of speculation and threatened change is running through the ecclesiastical mind. The minister of a congregation, worshiping extemporaneously, falls into this current; moves with it; and is, in fact, one of those who intelligently, or by sympathetic influence, guide its course. If, now, he be conscious of the change, which is agitating the mind of the Church, and which is passing in his own; and if, withal, he be an honest and a bold man; he may, and probably will, utter his new convictions in his public devotions; and thus, if those new convictions belong to what his Church deems heterodoxy, or error, he may be detected; and, unless his congregation sympathise with him, he may, by an act of discipline, be removed from his post of influence. But if, as it will probably happen, he be, at first, without a distinct consciousness of the nevertheless real change, which is passing in his mind; and if, though an honest, he be yet a timid man; more especially, if, as it may happen, he be a man of unscrupulous conscience, who knows what he is doing; who intends to lead the Church, so far as his influence extends, away from its fixed and ancient landmarks of faith and doctrine; and who, in the fervor and strength of his new convictions, deems it right to effect his great and, in his own estimation, good end, by politic and artful means; then, evidently, a plain and easy way lies open for his entrance.

While his people, at worship, are in what I have described as the true attitude of the devotional mind; looking upon their common leader in prayer as also their authorized teacher in doctrine; sweetly confiding in his guidance of their devotions; unsuspectingly drinking at the stream of worshiping thought, as it flows from his lips; appropriating HIS utterances as their OWN; and sending them up, with their silent 'AMENS,' to God; while they are waiting upon him in this spirit, he at first, either

unconsciously, or by design, OMITS, not only in teaching, but especially in devotion, all reference to those old and distinctive truths of the Gospel, in which the ancient doctrinal landmarks of his Church had been set up. What follows? In a few years, these distinctive truths lose, by simple neglect, their practical importance and hold on the mind; a dimness settles on the spiritual perceptions of the flock; and all that once, in their view, constituted the peculiarity of the Christian's faith, lies as if under a dense and distant fog. At length, as his own convictions change and strengthen, and fill him with the impulses of their new-born force, or as he observantly finds the way prepared for a further movement; he worshipingly yields to those convictions, and begins to advance the new views, to which he has been led, not, at first, in a full and startling dress, but in a softened and unsuspicious form. The devotional mind has already become accustomed to the *absence* of old forms of faith and doctrine: it now becomes easily familiar with the *presence* of the new phase of theology; exhibiting, as it yet does, much that is plausible, or not incompatible with accredited views. The way is now prepared for a still further movement. Under the growing change, which has seized it, the mind of the people becomes distinctly conscious of a positive dislike for what it can recall of the old orthodoxy. It therefore endures, with somewhat like real relish, the fuller and bolder invectives against that system, which begin to be hazarded, even in teaching; and which, perhaps unconsciously, partake somewhat of the extravagance of caricature. In this state of mind, the full result of the movement has approached the birth. The work of change becomes complete; and both minister and people finish their transition by passing, *openly* and *avowedly*, into some one of the new, erroneous, and perhaps fatal theologic systems of the day. A minority, it may be, remain steadfast in their old faith: but this only insures a new division in the Church; the organization of a new and feeble congregation; and, peradventure, an excited legal contest about the temporalities, which such a division involves. Which way soever this contest is decided, the body of the congregation is led off from its former faith; and, if the change

be, as supposed, from truth to error, the Christian scheme is either partially, or fundamentally subverted; and the living efficiencies of the Gospel, seriously, perhaps fatally, nullified.

I present this view,—not as against the private liberty of any man to form, or to alter, his personal faith on his personal responsibility to God;—much less as actuated by a desire to excite unpleasant or unkind feelings in others;—but, as against the stability of the public and settled faith of the Church; and as calculated to shew the operation of the extemporaneous mode of worship under given circumstances of the case. To my mind, the view taken explains a large class of facts familiar to multitudes of the past, and of the present age. If the faith of Churches, organized on the Congregational, or Independent basis, have been more frequently overthrown by the influence, or the co-operation, of this mode of worship, than that of other bodies worshiping in the same mode, it is simply, as I infer, because the Congregational, or Independent system of government makes each organized worshiping assembly a separate Church, with the powers of government and discipline complete in itself, and subject to little or no controlling, or even revising oversight from other and similarly organized bodies. The tendency, or liability, to such a subversion of the faith, it is evident, exists wherever this form of worship is adopted;—and the results of the tendency are exhibited, I apprehend, with more or less distinctness, through all the spreadings of the system.

II. Let us now, in the second place, look at the tendency of public worship by A FORM, previously settled and enjoined, as acting on the true devotional spirit, during the same supposed period of excitement and of threatened change in the mind of the Church.

By way of preparation, however, for such a view, it is proper to state the only ground, on which a truly enlightened Christian will attempt to defend the use of such a form. For a form, in the *abstract*, such a Christian can have no overweening fondness. His defence must rest on the principles and character of the particular form to be adopted.

In seeking, then, the grounds of his defence, he will demand

that such a form, besides being constructed on just logical principles, and in conformity with those of a simple, pure, and unchanging taste; besides comprehending all the ordinary wants of a worshiping congregation, and providing reasonably for all special occasions of public petition to God; besides being filled with true and ennobling, attractive and inspiring views of God, and with the very spirit of humble and reverential, fervent and heavenly devotion from man; shall imbody all the great and essential, unchanging and saving verities of the Gospel, free from any dangerous admixtures of human error. I mean not that a Liturgy should be filled with dogmatic theology; that it should be modeled on the ordinary forms of teaching, or consist of turning prayers into preaching; that it should recognize doubtful, especially if they be unessential points in Divinity; or that it should present even the essential, fundamental verities of the Gospel in aught of a doctrinal or controversial dress; but that it should be based on all these great verities as its foundation; that it should use them all devotionally; that it should work them all into its confessions and petitions, its thanksgivings and intercessions, its ascriptions and adorations, its anthems and hymns; and that in the power and sweet-savor, and prevalency of them all, it should ascend, and seek to make our worshiping hearts ascend, to the throne, and the ear, and the heart of Him that heareth and answereth His true people's prayer.

A Liturgy should thus imbody these living truths, free from all dangerous admixtures of human error, because, if it exclude these truths, especially if, while retaining, it overlay them with such an admixture of error, the very reason, which commends the use of a Liturgy *rightly* constructed, would legislate against it, and banish it utterly from the devotions of a redeemed and worshiping flock. A Liturgy, thus *falsely* constructed, would either want the soul of a true Christian worship, or stereotype error in its most imperishable forms, on the hearts and the habits, the memory and the mind of far-reaching generations. Were the use of such Liturgies as might be named to become universal in the Church, we might probably say with truth, that it had been better for "the faith

once delivered to the Saints," had the Printing Art lain undiscovered; had the pen never traced a letter beyond the inspired page; and had the true servants of Christ been left, with nothing but the Bible and the Spirit to teach, and with nothing but their own hearts and tongues to tell out, their adoring thoughts and their in-felt wants to God.

Whether the Liturgy which WE use be constructed according to the principles just stated I cannot stop minutely to inquire. I am willing to leave this question to all fair and candid minds, even among those, who, on the whole, prefer an extemporaneous worship. It is enough for my present purpose to say, that our Liturgy has received, from many of the most enlightened and pious of Evangelical Christians of other names, the highest and most eloquent commendations on the ground of its conformity to the principles which I have stated; and that some, if not all, of the defects or faults, which the eye of a Paley detected in the English book, were removed from the American, when we came to adapt it to the altered political condition of our country as it took its stand among independent nations. With these remarks I assume the point, that our Liturgy is remarkably full and rich in the saving truths of the Gospel; while, at the same time, it is free, not as some too idolatrously ween, from all human error, but as we may justly claim, from all dangerous admixtures of such error; that it is constructed on the justest principles of logic and of sound taste; is copious in its provisions for all the general, and for most of the special wants of a worshiping people; and abounds in such self-abasing confessions and supplications, and in such fervent and sublime strains of devotion, that the most broken-hearted penitent may well pour out his soul in the former, while glorious angels, were they visibly present, might cordially utter their loud "Amens" to the latter.

I proceed now to the second view which I have proposed; a view of the tendencies of such a form of worship, acting on the true devotional spirit, during periods of excitement and of threatened change in the mind of the Church.

We will, then, suppose the minister of a particular congregation, worshiping by such a form, to be in the same condition

of mind as that before instanced. He has fallen into the current, which is setting so deeply and powerfully through the public religious mind; he moves with that current; he reaches the result to which it tends; he becomes an ERRORIST, perhaps of the most dangerous kind. But, what now is the position in which he finds himself, as one, who may wish to change the faith of the Church into a conformity with his newly adopted views?

If he be a dishonest man, or a man of unscrupulous conscience, who thinks it right to effect what he deems a good *end* by means, which others would regard as of questionable morality, he cannot take advantage of the devoutly responding spirit of his worshiping congregation. He cannot make his people drink at the stream of his errors through the confidings of their *Amen-saying* mind. Though he himself be steeped in heresy, yet that to which they say 'AMEN,' is full of the richness and life of God's Truth. If he attempt to disseminate his errors, he can do it no where but in the PULPIT, or from the PRESS, or by CONVERSATION; and the moment he makes *this* attempt he must pour his doctrine into the ear of his people's CRITICAL INTELLECT. In this enterprise, he has not before him a confiding, appropriating body of worshiping minds, but a congregation, who feel that the reason and understanding, which he addresses, are their own; who have a right to judge him by his acknowledged and sworn standards; and who, in their jealous love for those standards, will not be slow either to see or to arraign the adventurous delinquent.—Before such a judge, abiding by such standards, the discrepancy between the Pulpit, the Press, or the lip of Colloquy, on the one side, and the loud, distinct, and incessant utterances of the DESK on the other, is at once detected; and, if that discrepancy be on fundamental points, he is at once removed from his post of influence in the Church. Examples of the operation of this principle have not been wanting even within the limits of our brief history as an independent Ecclesiastical Organization: * and if our Church should ever fail to cut off

* The case of the Rev. —— formerly of the Diocese of Connecticut, who attempted to teach the doctrines of *Universalism* from one of our pulpits, and who, notwithstanding the caution, with which he prosecuted his attempt, was detected and removed from the ministry,—was one in point.

such errorists, it will be, not because she wants means to detect them, but because she will have proved unfaithful to her Master and to her work; an unfaithfulness for which she will deserve the chastening which detected yet allowed corruptions will not fail to inflict.

If we take, what it is a happiness to know is, a more frequent case; if we suppose the minister in question, to be, though an errorist, yet an HONEST man, strong indeed in his convictions, but with a good conscience in his bosom; then, as his convictions become settled, (if they settle in the direction of the rationalistic extreme,) he cannot continue the use of our Liturgy. It imbodies and is based on truths, or, as he will consider them, errors, which will make his head ache every time he utters them on his knees, against his new convictions and amid his people's hearty 'Amens.' What shall he do? A hypocrite he cannot be, for he is an honest man and has a conscience, whose fair answer is of more value to him than thousands of wealth, or pinnacles of honor; and a wound upon which he more dreads than he does obscurity, and poverty, and rags. There is but one thing which he can do. He must retire from his ministry: a resistless voice *within* commands the movement: he obeys: and thus,—so far as his influence can now directly reach her faith,—THE CHURCH IS SAFE. Examples of the operation of this principle are familiar to all, who are familiar with our ecclesiastical history.*

* The great infrequency, rather the entire absence, of cases, in which an Episcopal Congregation have been led away from the faith of their Church, speaks, on this point, strong language. The case of King's Chapel, Boston, is no exception to the remark. It has been said that this, "The first Episcopal Church in New England, became the first Unitarian Church in the United States." [Vide, Hist. King's Chap. by Dr. Greenwood.] This, however, is an incorrect statement. That was not a case, in which an Episcopal *Church* became Unitarian; but, a case, in which an *Edifice, once* occupied by an Episcopal Congregation, subsequently came into the possession and occupation of Unitarians. The *building* was virtually vacated, by the incidents of the War of the Revolution, of its Episcopal occupants and worship;—and, thus vacated, passed at length into the hands of a virtually new Congregation, composed mostly of Unitarians. No sooner, however, was this transfer of the *building* effected, than it was resolved to alter the Liturgy by striking out all references to the great doctrine of the Trinity. It was equally impossible for the new Congregation, as honest men, to worship with the old Prayer Book, as it was for their officiating Reader, as an honest candidate for the ministry, to obtain Episcopal Ordination. Had

If, however, his convictions have settled,—not in the direction of the *Rationalist*, but—in that of the *Ritualist*, extreme, he is met with an opposite, though a scarcely less operative, characteristic in our Liturgy: its blank vacancy of all that can minister to the longings of that peculiar taste, which accompanies the adoption of Romish dogmas and observances, as uniformly as a shadow follows its substance. In continuing the use of our liturgy, he finds not a penance for the post-baptismal transgressor, nor a missal for the worshiper of transubstantiated elements; not a trace of the confessional, nor a line about human merits; not a prayer for the dead, nor a mass for patients under Purgatorial discipline; not a single prayer to the Virgin, nor an invocation to a solitary saint; not a note of wonder at the miracles of the Church, nor even a viaticum for the distressed Christian "*in extremis*;" not a pæan to celibacy, nor a laud to virginity; not a shrine for a consecrated relic, nor a receptacle for an anointed picture; in short, not a single ceremony designed for pomp, nor a solitary contrivance for inspiring awe; but all plain and decent in posture, all simple and beautiful in order, all sound and scriptural in utterance, all rational as well as fervent in devotion: nor can he *introduce* into the forms, which he uses, any thing to awaken in others the longings, which are consuming himself: not a word of truth can he leave out, nor a syllable of error, bring in, while conducting the worship of the Church: *nothing* can he do towards the end, at which he aims, but introduce a few poor changes of posture and of costume, which, by their very meagerness, fail to satisfy himself, while, by their dim pointing towards somewhat more startlingly significant, they displease most others, and betray the secret errors, which would beguile them from their faith. His position, in truth, becomes one of serious embarrassment. The cravings of his secret appetite are left, unfed, in painful hunger; and the steps of his half-

the original Congregation of King's Chapel never been dispersed, and the use of the Liturgy among them by an Episcopal clergyman never been interrupted, that venerable Edifice, and that ancient Congregation, had doubtless remained to this day; the latter as sound in the *faith*, as the former had proved loyal to the *worship*, of our truly Orthodox Church.

timid movements are watched by a thousand reproving looks; till, even if he succeed in screening his errors from ecclesiastical censure, his conscience as an honest man, and his feelings as a self-respecting man, compel him to abandon a ministry, to which he can no longer be comfortably loyal; and thus, to deliver the Church, which he serves, from the teaching and from the influence of his inconsistent example.

It was the pressure of that negative character of our liturgy, now noticed, which stimulated the efforts of some in the English Church to restore to credit, and thereby bring back into use, the whole discarded, and for ages unused, Romish Breviary. The Ritual Spirit felt, amid what seemed to it the ceremonial poverty of the Anglican forms, a painful sense of want, not easily to be endured. It, therefore, sought elsewhere its necessary food: first, by endeavoring to bring that food *to itself* in the English Church: and finally, when that proved impossible, by going *after it* to the Church of Rome. Truly, then, this Ritual Spirit, so far as it finds entrance, must be in a most famishing condition amid the more severely simple forms, in which the worship of our American Episcopal Church is set forth. These forms are, indeed, rich to those, who love the manna, and beautiful to those, who admire the plainness, of heavenly truth; but they must be poor to those, who long for the splendid ornament, and common to those, who sigh for the imposing pomps, of a long discarded Superstition. It can be no wonder if such should be incessantly studying change. Our liturgy cannot satisfy their cravings; nor can they ever use it in diffusing their peculiar tastes through the Church.

The view, which I have been taking, will help to illustrate the influence of such a liturgy as ours in the public worship of the Church, when operating, not only on a single congregation through the ministry of a single man, but also on the whole Ecclesiastical Body and through a long succession of generations. In this operation, it is *eminently conservative of the true faith of the Gospel.* Full as it is of the very marrow of divine truth; correct and chaste as it is in its style; fervent and often sublime as it is in its spirit; it is also a composition, with which we almost necessarily become familiar. It lives in our

earliest and latest, in our fondest and holiest, associations. It furnishes much of our worshiping language, and many of our worshiping thoughts: and though not designed, in its use, to fill our prayers with sermons, yet, in its remembered strains, it does practically fill our hearts with doctrines; and that, too, with doctrines in their most valuable forms; not laid up, as sharp weapons, in the armory of our Critical Intellect, but preserved, as living and holy truths, in the spirit of pure, perennial devotion. The truths of our religion, thus associated, thus imbibed, and thus preserved, operate, among us, on the mind and heart of imitative Childhood, of ardent Youth, of digestive Manhood, and of meditative Age; and thus become, in a sense, inwrought into the substance of the Church, and live and act as elements in her enduring constitution. The process may give to our ecclesiastical temperament less of the excitable, the impulsive, and the strenuously, though fitfully active: yet it probably imparts to that temperament more of the contemplative, the healthful, and the long lived.

Thus far, we have looked at the two forms of Worship, in their comparative action on the truly devotional mind, during periods of movement and of threatened change in the Church. If we were to examine their comparative action on the *ordinary* mass of mind,—indevout, unworshiping, as it always and every where is by nature; we should possibly find the comparison somewhat modified. In this, its natural state, if the mind, listening to a set form, learn to repeat by rote what it afterwards cares not to ponder; in listening to an extemporaneous form, it may learn to listen with incredulity to what it cannot appreciate, or with mere curiosity to what pleases its natural tastes. Under such a set form as ours, if the indevout mind learn *any* thing, it can learn little or nothing but God's truth: while, under an extemporaneous form, it will prove quite as susceptible as the devout spirit itself both to the *absence* of truth, and to the *presence* of error. And thus, when the ripening hour for *change* has come, the mind, in *this* state, may be found even more ready than that, which has thoroughly and devoutly digested its errors, for the deciding movement, which is to follow. For *error*, in all its forms, the affinity of the

natural mind is uniformly stronger than that of the *spiritual;* inasmuch as the latter has *something*, while the former has *nothing*, to correct its native aversion to the self-mortifying strictness of Christianity.

III. There are other points, upon which the two forms of worship might be compared, but which the main design of this discourse does not require me fully to discuss. It may not, however, be improper, before closing, to give them a very brief notice.

The principal objections, then, to public worship by a previously settled and enjoined form, are these two: 1. The use of such a form, it is urged, tends to FORMALISM, through a continual repetition of the same words; the tongue, in its familiarity with the sounds, repeating language, the meaning of which an untasked attention fails of carrying to the heart. 2. Such a form is incapable of adaptation to many of the most interesting exigences of times, places, and circumstances: it cannot make the most effective use of providential occurrences, and of local states of religious feeling. The use of an extemporaneous form, it is claimed, is far less exposed to the dangers of formalism; and far more capable of occasional and local effectiveness, in awakening the religious sensibilities, and in cultivating the religious affections, amid the ceaseless, and often impressive incidents of life.

But, though a candid mind will not hesitate to admit the tendency of FORMS to FORMALISM; yet, a discriminating mind may, perhaps, be able to see, that the tendency is stronger in the sound of the words, than it is found to be in the experience of Christians. There is such a tendency; but it is not irresistible: it may be counteracted. It needs but the life and spirit of religion, as ordinarily attendant on a faithful and earnest preaching of the Gospel, to keep this tendency within as narrow limits, under the use of set forms of worship as under that of the extemporaneous mode. The tendency to formalism in religion is by no means limited to the use of prescribed forms of worship. It is a tendency, into which our nature too easily runs, even when partially sanctified, and when worshiping in the most informal way. Safety from it, under all cir-

cumstances, is the gracious reward of nothing but strict and incessant watchfulness over the state of the heart and the spirit of its devotions: and, on these conditions, that safety is as well assured to those, who worship by a prescribed, as to those, who use an extemporaneous mode.

Again: it need not be denied that a prescribed form of Worship is incapable of being minutely and perfectly adapted to the ever changing exigencies of life. But, perhaps, this disadvantage is more than counterbalanced by accompanying safeguards against certain evils, to which, through its capabilities in this and other respects, extemporaneous worship is exposed. In the use of prescribed forms of worship, the officiating minister cannot make his own private and often *peculiar* feelings and experiences jar upon the common and frequently *dissimilar* feelings and states of mind in his auditory: nor can one minister ever be *praying* for what another is, at the same time, *deprecating*. In the use of such forms, he cannot fall into the painfully embarrassing hesitations, mistakes and improprieties of expression, which so often mark the public devotional exercises of ungifted minds: nor can he ever follow the eccentricities of his own genius, and thus be led, as many often are, into irreverent familiarities, or unsafe extravagances; startling forms of expression, or mere flights of oratory; informing narratives before God, or virtual sermonizing before men.

When, these and similar things are considered, it will be evident, that prescribed forms of Worship have some peculiar advantages, and are free from many special disadvantages: and that, if extemporaneous Worship be, at times, and for an occasion, remarkably and peculiarly impressive and effective, it is, at other times, embarrassingly lame, or disturbingly eccentric; often unprofitable in its matter, and frequently doctrinal, rather than devotional, in its dress: while Worship by a prescribed form, such as ours, is always decent and dignified, devout and solemn, elevated and edifying: in short, uniformly fit to be offered, by sinful and penitent, believing and adoring *mortals*, at the footstool of that Throne, whereon is seated the high and the holy, the all-knowing and the all-gracious *Immortal*.

It would be easy to enlarge on these and similar points of comparison. But my purpose leads me not farther in this direction. My main object in this discourse has been, to present the subject in what seems to me one of its strong lights; and, having done so, to leave it, without much collateral remark, for contemplation in the hours of still and quiet thought. It is enough to say, touching such points as those, which I have now briefly noticed, they shew that each of the two forms of worship has its peculiar advantages, and its peculiar disadvantages; that, as these advantages and disadvantages are brought before different minds by the forces of education amid the circumstances of life, and the varieties of human temperament, it is not strange that some should strongly lean to the extemporaneous, while others as strongly incline to the pre-composed, form. Allowing, however, that the general arguments on either side were more evenly balanced than, to my mind, they appear to be; still, the special view, which, in this discourse, I have endeavored to present, comes, in my judgment, with an overwhelming weight upon the question, and moves the balance decidedly in favor of public Worship by such a form, as that which I have described.

There are some, indeed, who would turn the argument from this view in favor of an opposite conclusion. The fact, that such a form of worship tends to stereotype the faith and doctrines of the Church, in the minds of the people as well as on their written records, furnishes, with them, the very reason why such forms should be rejected from the worship of the Church. They hold not to this FIXEDNESS of faith and opinions in religion. They are believers in PROGRESS, in DEVELOPMENT, in this as in other subjects. They consider Religion, like Philosophy, an IMPROVABLE science; not only as being capable of a more and more perfect comprehension, and as tending to improve human character in the individual and in the mass; but also as admitting of changes and new discoveries in its own elementary principles. They would therefore take away every thing,—forms, creeds, reverence,—every thing, that can stand as a barrier against full and perfect liberty of change, and of progress. Unchangeableness in the Church's faith and forms

is, to them, an offense. It gives no chance to their improvements upon what others deem the Divine plan and wisdom. The argument, therefore, which I have urged, instead of convincing them, turns them exactly the other way, and settles them, more firmly than ever, in their opposition to all prescript Worship, though it were by the best of forms.

With such as share this feeling, I can have little hope of prevailing. But, with those who adopt a different view, I may hope my argument will have weight. Those, who believe that Revealed Truth, as it came from God, has in it fixed elements;—that Christianity has a settled and unchangeable base;—that God has spoken all His mind concerning the Way of our Salvation, and distinctly intimated His design to "add no more;"—and that the faith of the Church should ever answer to its divine Archetypes, "as, in water, face answereth to face;"—those, who believe that the Church's progress and development should be from grace to grace, and from faith to faith,—not in the sense of changing *one* grace for *another*, or an *old* system of faith for a *new*, but—in the sense of carrying *every* grace to its highest attainable perfection, and of developing, from the *one* faith of the ancient Bible, its richest fruits in the holy civilization of the Individual and of Society;—those, who hold that we should seek,—not for repeated *changes* of faith and doctrine, but—for a better practical, as well as intellectual apprehension of the *Immutable* Faith and Doctrine of God's holy Word; those, who regard the Church—not as a subject, upon which this World's spirit of curiosity and love of novelty may make their experiments, but—as God's Instrument for operating on the world in the blessed work of reclaiming it, for a just allegiance, to its Eternal King: those, who thus believe and hold, will, I apprehend, feel a peculiar force in the view which I have taken, and realize its great weight in deciding the question upon the comparative value of the two great forms of public Worship in the Church. The scriptural and edifying character of a Liturgy being secured—nothing further is essentially needed,—save a faithful PREACHING of "Jesus Christ and him crucified," and the full effusion, promised to such preaching, of the mighty power of the Holy Ghost;

to bring into the Church, and to PERPETUATE her highest life and her holiest efficiency: a life, serene as it would be enduring;—an efficiency, blessed as it would be powerful.

And now, in dismissing the topics, with which I have thought it not improper to follow the argument on the comprehension of the Church Universal, let me ask the reader to join me in breathing forth, humbly and fervently, at the feet of Him, who is, "to the Church, Head over all," these brief aspirations: that all Christians, whether they write, or read, or whatsoever they do, may be lead to seek mainly for ONE thing; not so much for an acute skill in controversy; not so much for triumph in debate; not so much for victory over all, who cannot see things indifferent with exactly our eyes;—as for a free and full in-breathing of the Life of Christ, through the power of the Spirit, and by the quickening of the Father's Word;—and that, thus, the whole "Church of the Living God" on Earth may the sooner be penetrated with one DIVINE NATURE, though it should never be known, in all its parts, by one HUMAN NAME: obeying ONE GOVERNMENT, as alone infallible, the Government of her Divine Head; and bowing in ONE WORSHIP, as alone acceptable to Heaven, THE WORSHIP OF THE FATHER "IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH."

DISCOURSE XIII.

"The General Assembly and Church of the First-born, which are written in Heaven."—Heb. xii; 23.

In this discourse, I propose no addition to the *arguments*, with which the foregoing work has been concerned. My object is, so far as may be, to give a holier power to what has been said by carrying the whole subject, which has been discussed, up to that future and finished result, wherein all that is imperfect in the Church on Earth will be seen swallowed up forever in the perfections of the Church in Heaven. If, in what has thus far been written, there have been too much of a taint from earthly influences, it will be pleasant to the writer,—he hopes it may be no less so to the reader,—to close the book with something that shall serve to remind both of the purities of a better world.

We are taught by the Apostle that there were, in the ancient Church, "patterns of things in the Heavens." Some of those patterns are enumerated in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Thus, the sacrifices and sprinkling of blood, observed by the Church under the old Dispensation, were "patterns" of the one great Offering, and of the true Blood of sprinkling, which Christ, our great High Priest, is continually presenting in Heaven.* Thus, too, the Most Holy Place in the temple of the ancient Church was a "pattern" of the "true" Holy of

* Heb. ix; 24.

Holies in Heaven, into which Christ has entered with that one perfect offering of Himself.* In Heaven, there is continual worship, as we learn from the visions of him, who spake in the Apocalypse. The elders, who "worship Him that liveth forever and ever,"—"rest not, day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come."† Worship on Earth, is an act of the Church. This worship on high, therefore, implies the existence of a Church in Heaven. Moreover; he, who had the visions of the Apocalypse, saw in Heaven, the "Bride the Lamb's wife;"‡ one of the mystic names, by which the Church of Christ is designated.

There is, then, A CHURCH IN HEAVEN. It is "the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, whose names are written" there. To this "General Assembly and Church of the First-born" Christians do, indeed, "*come*" even while they continue *on earth;* for it is while they are thus on earth, that their "names are written in Heaven." Still the language of the Apostle is most happily descriptive of the state of the Church on high; and it is only in that state that our coming to it will be finally and fully realized. Christ "loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that he might"—"present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." This presentation will be literally and fully realized only in Heaven. The Church is, indeed, presented to Christ on earth; and it is, in one sense, even here, "a glorious Church:" but it will never be perfectly "holy and without blemish" till the day, when the grand marriage of "the Bride, the Lamb's Wife," shall be celebrated in solemn state before the throne of God.

There is a Church in Heaven. Heaven itself, considered as a state of being and relations, and as made up of those, who fill that state, is a Church. In that Church JESUS Himself is "The great BISHOP and Shepherd of souls." Its MEMBERS are "The First-born,"—the choice ones of God, the first or best

* Heb. ix; 8 and 12. † Rev. iv; 8 and 10. ‡ Rev. xxi; 9.

fruits of His creatures; and their "names are written in Heaven," in the Registry of Life. Its BAPTISM is the full affusion of the Holy Ghost and of fire,"—the spirit of glowing, heavenly love, poured abundantly upon all hearts. And its HIGH SACRAMENT is a feast on "angels' food," the manna of immortality;—a feast,—not on the PLEDGES,—but on the REALITY, of that as yet great mystery,—LIFE EVERLASTING in Christ our Head. If, then, there be a Church in Heaven, we cannot have better employment on earth than in making ourselves familiar with its characteristics, and partakers of its spirit. To this end may a blessing be shed down upon us from that upper—inner Sanctuary.

What, then, are the characteristics of the Church in Heaven?

1. It is characterized by UNION.

I say UNION, rather that UNITY; because, of the two, the former is the higher and more perfect state. As we have seen, there may be Unity, where there is no Union. But, in the Church, taken as one whole, there can be no Union, which does not include Unity. UNION is UNITY SANCTIFIED.

On earth, the uniting principle operates feebly, and inconstantly. In Heaven it acts powerfully and constantly; so that the very basis of the Church in glory is—Union:—a perfectly united condition of the innumerable parts, or members of the glorified Body. There are no SCHISMS in Heaven. The members of Christ there do not look on one another with the sickly eye of prejudice, till brother learns to hate his brother. They do not call one another by odious names there, till at length the very *sound* of some two-edged epithet, wounding the heart both of him, who utters, and of him, who receives it, stirs to action most unholy tempers. There are no rival SECTS in Heaven, each striving to build its own, and to demolish the other's house: no dividing walls to prevent Christians from seeing and speaking with Christians; no separate streams of charity, kept by artificial dikes from flowing into one common channel. But LOVE, mighty love, melts down all barriers, opens all hearts, and unites all minds. Love, there, is the true "bond of perfectness;" a bond never broken, leaving

not a soul out of its sacred zone, but holding ALL in a blest eternal UNION. There, is presented the literal fulness of that, for which the Savior prayed;—"That they ALL may be ONE;—as thou, Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be ONE in us."—"And the glory, which thou gavest me, I have given them: that they may be ONE even as we are One. I in them and Thou in me, that they may be made PERFECT IN ONE."

2. The Church in Heaven is also characterized by PURITY.

I use this term, now, not as synonymous with *holiness* in the children of God, but as opposed to *mixture* among them of those, who *belong not* to them. Heaven is a pure Church because it contains no false members; no hypocrites, or intentional deceivers of others, and no formalists or careless deceivers of themselves. All, who are admitted to membership there, are admitted under the inspection of the All-seeing Eye; an eye that looks through all outward forms, into all secret motives. Membership there is a vital reality. There are no dead branches there, whose only distinction is that they lie within the enclosure of the Church Vineyard. All are there living branches, grafted into Christ, "the True Vine," and growing out of Him as the real "Tree of Life." In Heaven, there are no "tares" among the "wheat;" for no enemy finds the great Husbandman asleep that he may sow them. The "net," which is "let down" from heaven into the great sea of Time, gathers not good and bad, but good alone upon the eternal shores. In Heaven, it is never said of professing Christians; "They went out *from* us because they were not *of* us:" but all there are regenerate in heart, as well as in outward relation;—all are baptized with the Spirit as well as with the water; and all not only sit down at His table, but also feast on life with the living Savior.

3. SANCTITY is another characteristic of the Church in Heaven.

The members of that Church are not only set apart from common and profane uses, but separated also from every form and degree of sin; not only consecrated as vessels of honor unto God, but also "*meet* for the Master's use." They have no-

thing wrong in their natures. They do not, it is true, feel like the Angels, who can look up to God, in the sweet consciousness that they have never offended Him: but they do feel like Redeemed ones, who can look up to their Father, with the joyful certainty that He has delivered them from all their offences and made them, once more and forever, perfect in His sight. They hear when it is said; "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them *white* in the blood of the Lamb." These were "redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb. In their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." To use the Apostle's phrase; "In the body of His flesh, through death," Christ hath finally "presented" them to the Father "holy and unblamable, and unreprovable in His sight"

4. Another characteristic of the Church in Heaven is—LIGHT.

I speak not of the light, which visits these poor, feeble eyes of flesh; but of the true light the shining of TRUTH, the light of the *soul*. In Heaven there is no *Error*, nor any to teach error, concerning either God or His ways, either man or his destiny. There is no *ignorance* there, as growing out of the disuse of the faculties of the mind; nor any *mistake*, as originating in that feebleness, which cannot always use those faculties aright. All these forms of darkness are dispersed, "and the true light shineth." Heaven is full of TRUTH, of KNOWLEDGE, and of CERTAINTY. There are no HERESIES in that Church. Nor is there any "seeing through a glass darkly;" all is "face to face:" no "knowing but in part;" all "know even as they also are known." TRUTH, in Heaven, is like a great SEA; fathomless indeed and shoreless, but *transparent* throughout;—and the Christian there is like one, who, from the shore of some beautiful isle, looks down into the clear depths, as they reveal to him all their wonders, and who rejoices that there are no limits to his discoveries but those, which lie in the very *boundlessness* of the transparency. This seems to be the mystery, which John saw in the Revelations, when the Heavenly City appeared to him as "pure gold, like unto *clear glass*:" it was the

gold of simple TRUTH, translucid to the eye of the spiritual man. A similar mystery came before his eye, when he saw beneath the light of the seven mystic lamps burning "before the throne,—a sea of *glass, like unto crystal;* and in the midst of the throne and round about the throne,—four living creatures *full of eyes:*"* it was the transparent sea of TRUTH, spread out beneath the light of God's all-illuminating Spirit, into whose clear depths the eyes of the holy ones are ever looking to wonder and adore.

5. SEPARATENESS is likewise characteristic of the Church in Heaven.

Here, even true Christians are more or less conformed to the world in their tastes, habits, and intercourse. There, even the *spirit* of such conformity disappears. In Heaven, the Church is separate from the world,—not because walls of adamant and gates of brass, have been built between them; nor because measureless space has been interposed to prevent their association;—but because the *desire* to associate is unfelt. Moral differences there are seen in the light, which reveals all things; and being seen, are felt; and the *seen* and *felt* difference between the holy and the unholy, THIS is the wall, which separates their destinies. THIS constitutes the immeasurable distance, which is interposed between their eternal abodes. The voice of God, which separates the wicked from the righteous, is not a sound made in the ear of *sense*, but a conviction uttered into the heart of *conscience*. His segregating power is the light of His truth, shining up and showing all things just as they are; and, with its revealings, sending home into the souls of the holy and the unholy a consciousness of eternal dissimilitude. No where, but in the world of spirits, is that great truth, which Jesus taught, felt in its full power;—"Every one that doeth *evil* hateth the *light*, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But, he that doeth *truth* cometh *to* the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God."†

6. SOCIAL FELLOWSHIP is still further characteristic of the Church in Heaven.

* Rev. xv; 2.—iv; 6. † John iii; 20, 21.

The members of that Church have "fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," as well as with one another. "The Church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven," is also called, "The General ASSEMBLY." It is a COMPANY, and exhibits the perfection of SOCIAL LIFE. It admits of no dissocial grades. Diversities of rank, office, and station may exist there; but if they do, they excite no separating feeling; they oppose no bars to freedom and cordiality of intercourse. There are no artificial restraints, or formalities, or coldnesses, in the society of the "Saints in light." The loftiest spirit there feels no embarrassment in holding open fellowship with the lowliest servant of the Savior; but delights to sit in sacred converse and communion with him at the feet of Jesus. Among the members of the Church in Heaven, there are no rivalries, no jealousies, no clashing interests, no great families to be built up and enclosed and kept distinct from the poor, the obscure, the unknown. Nothing among them represses the indulgence of mutual sympathies. They are, as Jesus requires, "like little children;" and, like little children, they act just as they feel, and feel just as they act. Earthly titles, earthly wealth, and earthly prejudices, are left down in the grave, side by side with the obscurity, the indigence, and the depression of the once suffering children of God; and the worshipers in the Heavenly Sanctuary, the guests at the sacrament above, having laid aside these their incumbrances, and dropped all their badges of outward distinction, stand up together in a nobler fellowship than this earth knows,—the fellowship of "the spirits of just men *made perfect*."

7. Thus variously characterized, the Church in Heaven is, still further GLORIOUS. There is a glory in its REST, in its JOY, and in its ACTION.

In its REST, there is glory. No sorrow, no suffering, no tears, no death, darken its radiance. Its repose is the calm, which surrounds the moveless throne of God; a living calm, a repose fearless of interruption.

In its JOY, also, there is glory:—a beaming of "the fulness of God" upon the sanctuary of His chosen. The joy of the

Church in Heaven is the sunlight of eternal holiness and eternal happiness, shining through the souls that worship there. It is the everlasting light of God's love in their hearts.

And in the ACTION of the Church in Heaven, there is glory:—the strength, the harmony, the intelligence, of a perfect Body, governed by one perfect Head, moved by one perfect will, and tending to one infinite good. The members of that Body, are *unfainting* spirits. "They rest not, day and night," in their divine employ. No clogs of sense, no burthen of the flesh, no dull, and earthly, and weary affections weigh them down. In their worship they never flag: in their search for knowledge they never tire: and in their labor of love they never grow heartless. Energies worthy of the Redeemed are alive there. Whether they sing the song of those, who, have been saved; or study adoringly into the wonders of the Divine character and of His plan of Redemption; or wander, discursive, amidst His boundless works; or trace the streams of knowledge up to their fountains in the eternal hills;—whether they do one, or the other, or all, of these things, they alike put forth the activities of free and noble, sinless and mighty spirits. Their activities are all-glorious!

8. The Church in Heaven, finally, is PAST ALL DISASTROUS VICISSITUDE. It wades not through the blood and fires of successive Pagan persecutions. It passes through no night of Dark Ages. It whets no sword, prepares no torture, and contrives no death, for those servants of God, who refuse to bow their necks to the yoke of error. It quakes amidst the throes of no violent Reformation. It languishes not amidst returning slumber, declension, and decay. It dips no pen in the gall of controversy, to stir up strife and teach brethren how to hate. It wars not against the Word of God. It cloaks no infidelity and no sensuality under the forms of combrous and unmeaning ceremonies. But, past all disastrous change, purified from all defiling mixtures, and made perfect by the discipline of ages, it is at rest on its immovable foundation, a Spiritual Church, full of God, of His light, His love, and His praise.

Such is Heaven, considered as A CHURCH. Is not "the King's daughter *there*, all glorious within?" Is not "her clothing of

wrought gold?" In describing her, I have not dealt in vain imaginations. The gold, with which I have shown her vesture to be wrought, has been dug from the mines of inspired truth; of truth, inspired by Him, to whom all things in Heaven and on Earth, are visible. The characteristics of the glorified Church *above*, are all characteristics of the True Church *below*; —only they are but imperfectly manifested in the present world. Their perfection is seen nowhere but in the world, where God appears unveiled to the eye of His "saints in light."

If, then, it may be supposed, that any of the readers of this book have heretofore been thoughtless and careless of their souls, I would ask them a parting question;—Will you go and join that "glorious Church,"—that Church "without spot or wrinkle," that Church which is "holy and without blemish?" If you hope to live in Heaven, you must be willing, you must be FIT, to become members of THE CHURCH IN HEAVEN. But, how is this? You hesitate. You are not ready to join even the Church on Earth. You do not feel prepared, or fit for fellowship with the saints in this their comparatively imperfect state. How, then, can you go and join that perfect, that glorious Church above? Would to God you were ready for membership *here*, sincere, believing, and affectionate membership, with the true, though as yet but partially sanctified disciples of Christ. On such a readiness God would smile, and ripen it into a perfect preparation for what awaits His own in Heaven.

But, the subject, thus carried up to its final issues, respects specially those, who are already members of the Church on Earth; and the principal thought, which it should keep alive in their consideration, is this.

The members of the Church on Earth ought to regulate their whole course of life, association, habit, and feeling with reference to future membership in the Church in Heaven. The true Church here is more than a *type* of the glorified Church there. This Earthly is more than a "*pattern*" of that Heavenly thing. They are parts of one and the same Communion and Fellowship. The Earthly is preparatory to the Heavenly. The one is a

school for education and discipline; the other is an endless life for action and for enjoyment. The one is the Porch; the other, the Great Temple itself. The one is youth, tender, impressible youth; the other manhood, firm, vigorous manhood. If then, the child should carefully train and fashion himself for the duties and the destiny of the man, so should the Christian on Earth regulate his whole course of life, association, habit and feeling, with strict reference to his future standing as *a member* of the Church in Heaven. He should do every thing here, which he would approve there; and nothing here, which he would there condemn. Imperfect light and knowledge here may keep him from always seeing what he would there either approve, or condemn; and the feebleness of nature may sometimes render him unable to do, or to avoid, what he knows he ought to do, or to avoid. But, so far as he sees, or can be made to see, what would be either approved or condemned in Heaven, and so far as he has, or can obtain, strength either to do, or to avoid doing it;—he should scrupulously regulate the present with reference to the future. He should habitually live as though his next communion were to be made in "the Church of the First-born," and at the table in Heaven.

And yet, how few ever think of making this the rule of their present Christian life. How few regulate their intercourse with the world by this rule. How few, by this, regulate even their intercourse with their fellow Christians. How few think of this either in their business, or in their devotions; and how few practice according to it, in either their pleasures, or their charities.

The cases, in which these suggestions will apply themselves, can be known only, or may be known best, by each individual member in the Church of Christ. This book, however, must not have its close, without an expression of the deep and solemn conviction, that, if there can be tears in that world, where "all tears are wiped away from all faces," Christians will shed them, when they come to look down from their seats on high upon the courses in life which they have been pursuing—upon the present state of their associations, their habits,

and their feelings;—so full of conformity with the world, so dull, so languid, so selfish, so slow to good, so little like what THEY ought to be, who profess to believe that "THEIR NAMES ARE WRITTEN IN HEAVEN."

Let us listen, then, to the voice which is sounding in our ears: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light:" and as we hear, let us rouse ourselves, gird up the loins of our mind, and henceforth live like men, who do *indeed* "wait for their Lord."

THE END.

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